



## Our Canyon Home: The Settling of Pinto Canyon

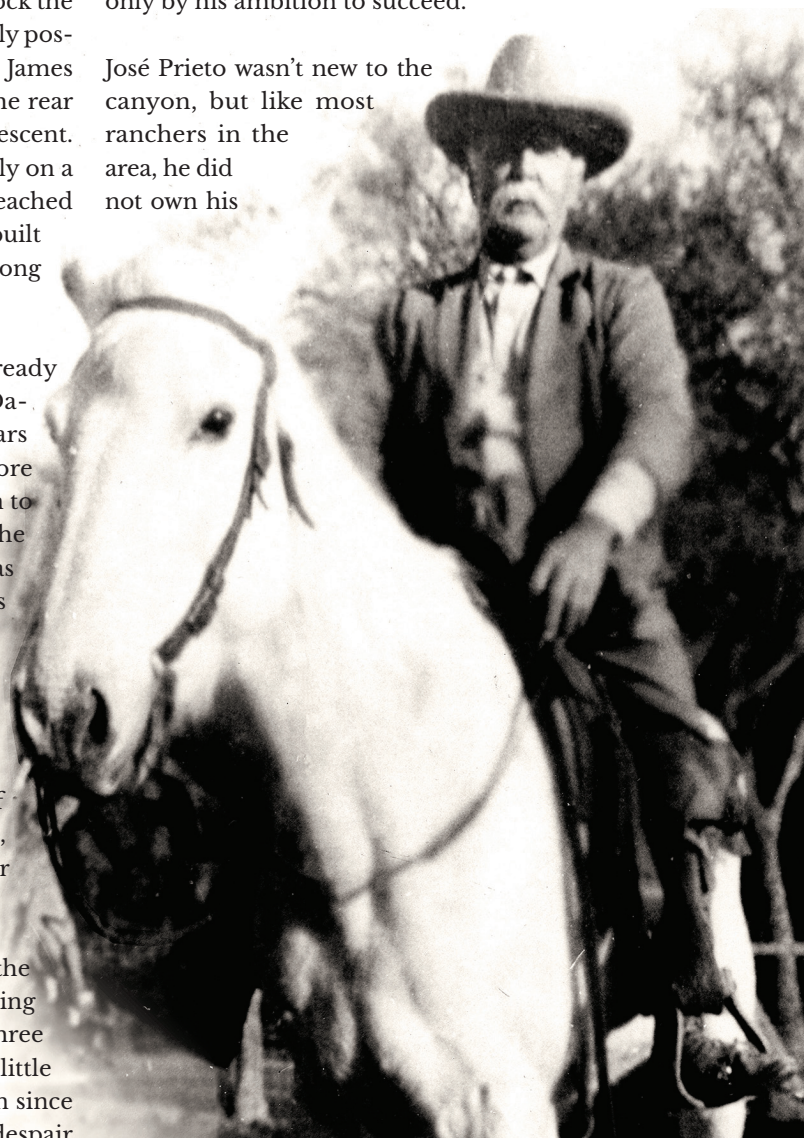
It was January of 1907, and the wagon creaked and swayed dangerously as Dora Wilson carefully guided the two-horse team down the rocky slope into Pinto Canyon. There was no road, scarcely even a trail. They had run a pole through the spokes, to lock the rear wheels in place. But even then, with all of their worldly possessions strapped down inside, the weight was too great. James Wilson and his friend, Hart Greenwood, tied ropes to the rear of the wagon, their horses bracing to further slow its descent. Darkness came, and the family pitched camp precariously on a small bench halfway down the slope. The next day they reached the canyon bottom, and soon pulled up beside a crudely built *jacal*—a one room rock house built by a squatter who had long since moved on. This shack was to be their new home.

The heyday for homesteaders in the Big Bend had already passed. All the good grazing land—Alpine valley, the Davis Mountains, the Marfa Plain—had been claimed years ago. Most of what remained was rough and broken, more shrubland than grassland, and better suited to goats than to cattle. Located as it was below the Marfa Plain and along the northern flanks of the Chinati Mountains, Pinto Canyon was such a place. But the state had recently passed one of its last and most generous land laws—allowing new settlers a full eight sections of school land, under condition of settlement and improvement. The result was a second land rush, a new flood of settlers eager to succeed, but who had to settle for land passed up by those who came before. The Wilsons were part of this latter wave. But if they were too late to stake a claim to the fertile grasslands, at least the land they got was expansive and with the meager but reliable flow of Pinto Creek, water was plentiful.

But trouble found them early. On their second day in the canyon, James' horse kicked him, breaking his leg, rendering him helpless to work or to care for his wife and their three young daughters. A doctor was summoned but there was little he could do except adjust the leg brace Wilson had worn since childhood, the result of paralysis suffered as an infant. If despair

set in, it was short lived, for not far down the canyon was their only neighbor, a man who would help the Wilsons through their most difficult hour, a man whose capacity for kindness was rivaled only by his ambition to succeed.

José Prieto wasn't new to the canyon, but like most ranchers in the area, he did not own his



*James E. Wilson, Pinto Canyon homesteader, ca. 1910. Photo courtesy of the Junior Historian's Collection, Marfa Public Library.*



land. Born in Santa Cruz de Rosales, Chihuahua, in 1866, he immigrated to the United States with his family at the age of eight. As many who came before and after, the Prietos sought a better life, escaping a past marred by servitude and—before that—slavery. They settled outside the hamlet of Ruidosa, one of several new farming communities springing up along the Rio Grande. Throughout his childhood, José helped his father Francisco on the family farm. When he came of age he began to work area ranches, branding calves and shearing sheep and goats. In 1891 he married Juanita Barrera and, with his new bride, moved into a crude dugout a stone's throw from Pinto Canyon. By the time José rode up the canyon to help the Wilsons, he and Juanita had already lived in the area for some 15 years.



*José Prieto, one of the earliest and most successful ranchers in Pinto Canyon. Courtesy of the Prieto Family Collection.*

goats and soon began building an adobe house up a tributary to Pinto Creek. Significantly, he would also have a chance to reciprocate José's kindness, offering a gift that would change his friend's life—by teaching him the required paperwork for filing on his own land. For Prieto, it was a windfall. Like so many others in the border region, the odds had been stacked against him—an illiterate Mexican in a world ruled by literate Anglos. Starting out with nothing more than a small herd of goats, by the end José had assembled one of the largest and most successful ranches in Pinto Canyon. It was a gift José never forgot. Throughout his life, he always credited Mr. Wilson with helping him to succeed.

That's how it was in the beginning. People helped each other, watching over their neighbors' livestock, loaning out a wire stretcher or fresno, rounding up and shearing together. It was all new, and they were all in it together. For in the first two decades of ranching in Pinto Canyon, there was much to be hopeful

While Mr. Wilson's leg slowly healed, José watched over his meager herd of cattle, making sure they did not stray from the canyon. He also began making regular trips down to the store in Ruidosa, returning with groceries to feed the family. To Wilson, José Prieto was no less than a godsend. A friendship developed between them that transcended ethnic differences, proving to be as lasting as it was rewarding. And not just for Wilson.

Weeks passed. The days began to warm. When Wilson could finally ride again, he set to improving his ranch. He traded his cattle for 100 Angora



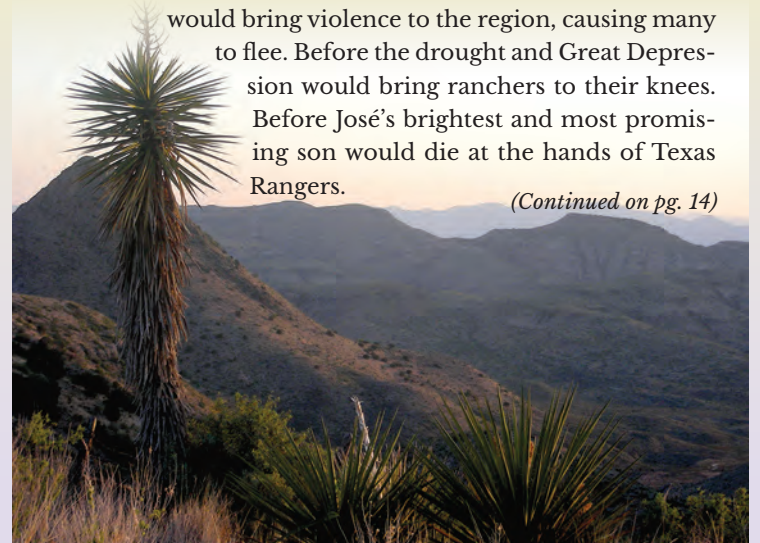
*The Wilson family in front of their adobe home in Pinto Canyon, ca. 1912. Courtesy of the Junior Historian's Collection, Marfa Public Library.*



*The José Prieto family, ca. 1914. Courtesy of the Prieto Family Collection.*

about—available land, adequate rainfall, fair prices. And there was progress: more families would arrive, a road would be built through the canyon, a schoolhouse would be constructed. And there, for a while, before the dark clouds began to form on the far horizon, the canyon would become its own insular community, where the children of four families—Anglos and Hispanic alike—would learn and play together, would share stories and dreams and experiences. Before the Mexican Revolution would bring violence to the region, causing many to flee. Before the drought and Great Depression would bring ranchers to their knees. Before José's brightest and most promising son would die at the hands of Texas Rangers.

*(Continued on pg. 14)*



*Pinto Canyon, looking west past Needle Peak from the edge of the Marfa Plain. Photo by David Keller.*



# Continuing Excavations at the Genevieve Lykes Duncan Site

While test excavations at the Genevieve Lykes Duncan (GLD) site (which occurred over a near two-year period) concluded in fall 2012, work has steadily continued at the site. Our recent efforts have been focused on a block excavation in the area of the site known as the Broadway Locale where concentrated Late Paleoindian features were identified during the testing phase. To accommodate long-term excavations, certain logistical matters were addressed first: 1) an elaborate shelter/shed was constructed over the block area to provide shade for the crew and to help protect the priceless Late Paleoindian-aged deposits; and 2) a smaller and more traditional shed was constructed for shade over a solar-powered water-screening station.

Test excavations had previously indicated the deposits directly overlying the planned block were culturally sterile, yet the geophysical (magnetometer and ground penetrating radar) investigation identified several nearby subsurface anomalies—these were shovel tested with negative results. Consequently, the ca. 2-m thick overburden was removed to the zone of strata containing the Late Paleoindian remains, leaving a level ca. 6 x 8 m area with the long axis paralleling the arroyo bank. Due to a number of factors, including costs and our desire to protect the deposits, only half of this area (3 x 8 m) was slated for excavation at this time. A grid was established, consisting of 22 whole 1 x 1 m units and 9 partial units along the arroyo wall. Within the grid, two east-west trending baulks were left in order to retain details of the stratigraphy and this divided the block into three separate excavation areas: north, central, and south. After charcoal and small scattered bits of fire-cracked rock (FCR) were first exposed in each of the areas, it became apparent that the deposits sloped gently from north to south. Fortunately, the baulks proved to neatly divide the block into compartmentalized areas with associated cultural debris at similar elevations; due to the slope, each area varies in elevation from adjacent areas by ca. 2 cm.

As the excavation proceeded using tightly controlled 2-cm levels in each unit, new light was shed on two of the previously recorded features, Feature 2 (F-2) and F-10, and a new feature (F-18) was

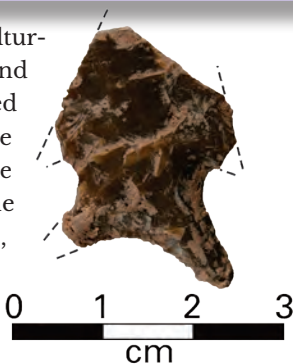
*New shelter for the on-going block excavation.*



*New exposure of Feature 2.*



*Newly exposed Feature 18.*



*Unusual "fish-tail" dart point found adjacent to Feature 2.*



*Biface found in-situ.*

uncovered. While neither F-2 nor F-10 has been fully excavated, additional FCR have been revealed adjacent to each and likely indicate that most of these features are intact. And, although erosion had scattered the upper portion of F-18, a small central basal area of it is intact and contains abundant woody charcoal. Creosotebush charcoal from F-18 yielded an uncalibrated conventional radiocarbon date of ca. 8250±47 radiocarbon years before present (RCYBP), only ca. 200 years earlier than radiocarbon dates from F-2 that lies about 6 m away.

Recovery of stone tools and lithic debris has been sparse, as is the case at most Paleoindian sites, yet these materials are comprised of both local (high and medium quality) and non-local (high quality)

*(Continued on pg. 11)*

# Of Artifact Collectors and Archaeologists The Black Rock Cairn

A recent interesting article by Chris Merriman in *El Palacio*, a flagship publication of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, touches upon the long-running “tumultuous” relationship between professional archaeologists and private artifact collectors in the Southwest (Merriman 2013:43–47). While expressing the archaeological perspective that collectors obtain artifacts with “less attention to detail than an archaeologist would,” Merriman goes on to explain that:

... not all collectors are the same, and there is a wide range of collecting behaviors. On opposite ends of the spectrum are those who are part of an inquisitive, well-meaning public that genuinely cares about prehistory, and those who collect artifacts for personal gain.

Merriman thus skirts the particulars of the perpetual collector-archaeologist debate, and instead focuses on the potentials for mutually beneficial working relationships between scientists and knowledgeable laymen. He makes his case by describing the positive interactions of archaeologists with Robert Weber, a well-known collector and avocational archaeologist in New Mexico.

During my long tenure as a Texas archaeologist, I gradually came to the realization that scientists have been made aware of only a tiny percentage—probably five percent or less—of highly significant archaeological discoveries made routinely by an army of collectors over the last century. If it could somehow be calculated, the magnitude of loss of scientific data concerning prehistory would be staggering (e.g., see Mallouf 2000). The reluctance of most collectors to share their finds with archaeologists is rooted in a hodge-podge of fact and fiction, far too convoluted to address here, that has plagued such interactions historically.

There are, however, many individual examples of successful cooperation between scientific and collector communities in Texas. One such example concerns the discovery of a remarkable prehistoric mortuary cairn by collectors in the Trans-Pecos region. Named the Black Rock Cairn, this unusual and singularly important prehistoric feature was discovered and subsequently excavated by James M. (Jim) Davis and friends during a hunting trip to the Davis Mountains area.

Jim Davis, now deceased, was a native of Sterling City and a familiar face among local historians as well as artifact collectors across Texas. His is one of the earliest ranching families to settle in Sterling County, and like his collector father before him, and his four siblings, Jim manifested a passionate interest in our Native American past. Wishing to share their discoveries, Jim and his father established a small museum at their ranch house to display the Davis collections. Before the death of his father,



James M. Davis.

Jim began to bring order to the collection by categorizing and displaying the expanding collection. For much of his life, he had collected without benefit of any archaeological training or guidance. Then, in his later years, through intensive self-study and professional tutoring, Jim pursued a more scientific archaeological attitude toward discovery, categorization, and display of artifacts. The museum now houses the earlier collected

materials as well as Jim's extensive collections and displays.

Perhaps due to knowledge garnered as a latecomer to the Concho Valley Archaeological Society, Jim began to better comprehend the magnitude of data loss inherent to uncontrolled digging and collecting. This is reflected both in his attempt to at least cursorily document, through photography and notes, some of his group's finds during their uncontrolled digging of Black Rock Cairn, as well as in subsequent actions.

A short time after their discovery and dig, I was approached by Jim and one of his associates who inquired as to whether or not their find, regardless of its destruction, would still be of interest to archaeologists. Thus began a cooperative arrangement between collector and archaeologist that led ultimately to a detailed, after-the-fact documentation of the feature and all associated artifacts. At one point, Jim and I traveled to West Texas and camped at the cairn site for the purpose of preparing a scale map of the find-spot. We obtained soil samples and additional photographic coverage of the site and its environs. While at the site, we made note of additional artifacts eroding from cracks in the bedrock beneath what had once been the cairn. During that trip, Jim repeatedly expressed his regret that such an important discovery had not been explored and excavated scientifically. Clearly, had he been able to repeat his discovery, he would have opted to involve a professional archaeologist.

While cairn (stacked rock) burials are not uncommon in the Trans-Pecos region, this particular feature was much larger and considerably more complex than the norm. In fact, as far as is known by this writer, nothing quite comparable to Black Rock Cairn and its contents has ever been encountered in the southwestern United States.



Upon discovery, the feature consisted of a circular stack of rock roughly six meters in diameter. Having quickly determined that the feature was man-made, Jim Davis and his friends began removing rock and digging in the soil beneath, where they found multiple human burials and stone artifacts that had been placed intentionally with the interments. During his three-day dig, Jim would occasionally stop progress to take photos that included groupings of artifacts from subareas within the cairn, and he took cursory notes concerning some skeletal and artifact distributions.

The cairn was later determined, from osteological analysis of a small sample of human bone saved by Jim, to have contained a minimum of seven individuals—five females and two males—and might actually have held as many as nine or more interments. Associated with the burials were almost 500 artifacts, including hundreds of arrow and dart points, bifacial knives, drills, a stone digging tool, stone ornaments, shell beads, fossil corals, and various minerals, the latter including raw copper ore, bits of azurite, sulphur crystals, and variable forms of hematite (iron ore). From a typological perspective, a span of some 9,000 years is represented among artifacts from the feature. It goes without saying that the archaeological implications of the cairn's contents are enormous.

The real point of this glance into one of a multitude of exceptional discoveries made by artifact collectors is that, if cooperation rather than suspicion were the norm, we could all greatly enrich our interpretation and reconstruction of the past. For the typical collector, possession of the artifact is the ultimate goal. While for the archaeologist, the artifact—documented in its original position with other artifacts and materials—is the key to understanding human behavior and changing lifeways. Professional archaeologists do not build personal artifact collections. If, upon making important discoveries, more collectors would involve archaeologists early in their finds prior to digging, both communities would benefit and critical scientific data could be saved. As our ancient, nonrenewable archaeological sites

continue to dwindle in number, knowledgeable collectors, like Jim Davis, could play increasingly key roles in sustaining the future of archaeological data recovery.

—Robert J. Mallouf

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*Turquoise pendants from Black Rock Cairn.*



*Examples of dart points from Black Rock Cairn.*

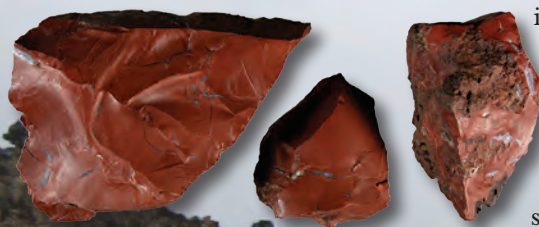


# CBBS Research across the Eastern Trans-Pecos

In 2013, Center for Big Bend Studies (CBBS) research endeavors across the Trans-Pecos were focused on a variety of topics, ranging from ongoing investigations of study areas on private ranches, to rock art studies, and aerial mapping. All of this work took place under the auspices of the Trans-Pecos Archaeological Program (TAP), established in 2004 to help guide the CBBS with a series of research topics geared toward fleshing out a larger understanding of cultural developments in the greater Big Bend region.

New discoveries on the 02 Ranch bring the total number of sites up to 493, a number of which were brought to the CBBS's attention by ranch manager Homer Mills. Still more buried archaeological deposits on the ranch were found along major drainage courses, and the characteristics of the sediments suggest that some may be as old as or older than the Early Archaic (6500–2500 B.C.). Several new discoveries represent different aspects of prehistoric lifeways, such as processing localities (mounds of burned rock produced while baking plant foodstuffs) and architectural remnants (Late Prehistoric and possible Archaic-aged wikiup ring foundations). Furthermore, excavation has continued amidst Late Paleoindian deposits at the Genevieve Lykes Duncan (GLD) site (this volume), and clues garnered from those efforts continue to aid in the search for more sites of this age on the 02 Ranch.

Recently, several toolstone procurement sites and quarries were discovered on landforms outlying the GLD site. These are locations where a *specific* stone was collected because its physical attributes met *specific* needs for the manufacture of stone tools—qualities not equally inherent in every type of stone. Explorations near the GLD site and other locations on the ranch have tentatively



*Jasper-like toolstone discovered on the 02 Ranch is represented in the GLD lithic assemblage.*

identified source areas for three specific varieties of toolstone of interest, each of which are represented in the lithic assemblage recovered from the GLD site, referred to variously as *claystone*, *mudstone*, *siltstone*, *silicified tuff*, or *jasper*. While we yet lack conclusive mineralogical and lithological analyses of these materials, each displays distinct vari-

ation in characteristics such as crystalline structure, grain size, lamination, and secondary inclusions that suggest a spectrum of formation processes (i.e., sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic). Significantly, they are all the product of a suite of processes associated with intense volcanism during the Tertiary Period 20–38 million years ago. Selection of specific stone for manufacturing tools or processing materials is a result of a multitude of decisions and variables, including accessibility, durability, ease of use and manipulation (flaking characteristics), and flake edge characteristics (sharpness). Each is balanced in turn, and clues regarding these decisions provide important information about technological and settlement strategies employed by prehistoric toolmakers on the 02 Ranch and across the larger Trans-Pecos study area.

Additional research efforts on the Pinto Canyon Ranch have produced promising results, helping to pave the way for ongoing studies into the future. A second season of excavation at Surprise Rockshelter shed light on a variant of Late Prehistoric architecture—a stacked stone enclosure within the confines of the shelter—grass-lined pits, stashes of tools and raw materials (ground stone

and processed lechuguilla fibers, respectively), and a range of technologies represented by perishable wooden materials (e.g., fire boards, arrow tips, and a painted *possible* billet). Center archaeologist Robert W. Gray has now conducted extensive analysis of over 900 time-diagnostic projectile points from the ranch, building a data set that will grow and be utilized for a variety of studies focused on typologies and settlement patterns.



*CBBS archaeologists investigating Surprise Rockshelter on the Pinto Canyon Ranch.*



*A variety of botanical remains from Surprise Rockshelter provides clues about Late Prehistoric features.*



Mark Willis worked with the CBBS to conduct aerial mapping of a remote and dramatic Cielo complex site at Desperation Mesa and a series of buried Late Archaic deposits around Warm Spring (see this volume). He also constructed a three-dimensional model and enhanced photo mosaic of rock art at Tablecloth Rockshelter, adding yet another layer of analysis to this noteworthy site.

Among the ever growing number of new sites discovered on the ranch are several that suggest a pattern of ceremonial or ritual behaviors, some of which may be related to Protohistoric horse nomads such as the Apache. The phenomenon is evident in a number of small basalt boulders (15 thus far) decorated with petroglyphs, most of which were discovered in a loosely circumscribed



*Basalt boulder with petroglyphs and possible trail blaze from the Pinto Canyon Ranch.*

setting—canyons, terraces, and ridges along the lower Sierra Vieja in proximity to spring outlets. Five of these boulders are located on the Dancing Rocks Petroglyph site (Mallouf 2013) that includes images of horses and humans. More small basalt boulder glyphs were recently discovered within 5 km of Dancing Rocks, each with distinct though currently indecipherable motifs, as well as several lone boulders with pecked or chipped “blazes” or patches—possible trail or route markers. In each instance, a live spring lies in close proximity. Together, they reveal an emerging behavioral pattern that appears to be unique to a specific geographic context, wherein native peoples attached cultural value to significant places and important resources. These places may have been marked or memorialized in a way akin to trail-side shrines found elsewhere in the world. This is one of many hypotheses being investigated by the CBBS as research continues on the Pinto Canyon Ranch.

The CBBS moved forward in 2013 with development of a regional rock art database, mostly through structuring of the database system and delineating specific attributes and fields for data entry. The evolving goal of the project is to provide a web-based



*Petroglyphs from the Black Hills in Brewster County, one of many images that will be inventoried in the developing rock art database.*

resource wherein site-specific rock art data is housed for the general public, and more detailed, sensitive information (e.g., locational data) can be provided

to accredited researchers. Given the number of rock art sites and complex nature of the documentation, building the database is a very laborious process. As it unfolds, the database will provide unprecedented access to one of the more intriguing aspects of Big Bend prehistory—the plethora of diverse images created over thousands of years by the region’s native occupants.

The CBBS also continues work at Guadalupe Mountains National Park, where we perform assessments of the conditions of archaeological sites in a variety of locations across the park. Assessments are considerable efforts involving extensive inventories, feature and artifact descriptions, GPS maps, and database forms addressing management information (site condition, impacts, and research potential). This effort is aimed at helping the National Park Service manage the hundreds of sites and cultural resources in the park (additional sites are recorded each year) in the midst of natural erosion, recreation, and economic development.



*A CBBS archaeologist inspects a high rock-shelter in the Guadalupe Mountains.*

—Samuel S. Cason

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*Canyons and peaks of Guadalupe Mountains National Park.*

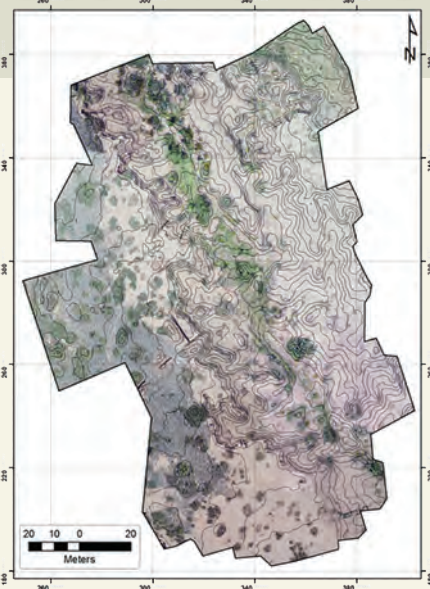


# Trans-Pecos Archaeological Imagery—Mar

For several years, the CBBS has been fortunate to partner with archaeologist and imagery specialist Mark Willis on a variety of research projects across the Trans-Pecos study area. Mark brings considerable technical expertise and creativity to bear on new ways of documenting archaeological phenomenon, often combining cartography, photography, and three-dimensional (3D) modeling. A fundamental process of Mark's work involves combining high resolution digital photographs with spatial information (X, Y, and Z coordinates), wherein a mosaic photograph is "draped" over a 3D model of the subject—be it an archaeological site, a prehistoric stone feature, or a stone surface covered with rock art images.

Low altitude aerial mapping is a particularly exciting aspect of Mark's work, a process in which he employs a variety of tools to acquire aerial images, including extendable poles, kites and blimps, as well as automated aircraft—a roto-copter and a drone. These devices, equipped with digital cameras, can capture hundreds or even thousands of images that are subsequently stitched together using computer programs to form seamless photo mosaics. Mark uses a process known as *photogrammetry* to generate three-dimensional data from two-dimensional images, so that the

resulting mosaic conveys topographic information such as elevations and landform contours. Ultimately, this process allows



*Photo mosaic of the Birthday site with topographic contour lines (left) and detail of prehistoric stone enclosures atop Desperation Mesa (right).*



the landscape to be analyzed in 3D while providing high-resolution maps of the target zone, the latter an essential component of all archaeological projects. Working with the CBBS over the years, Mark has applied these methods at a number of sites in the Trans-Pecos study area:

- Birthday (Early Archaic campsite on the 02 Ranch);
- Sundog (Late Prehistoric campsite on the 02 Ranch);

- Genevieve Lykes Duncan (multi-component campsite on the 02 Ranch);
- Lizard Hill (artifact cache and stone alignments in southern Brewster County);
- Dark Creek (burial and cairn alignment in southern Brewster County);
- Cuesta Arriba (prehistoric stone enclosures in southern Brewster County);
- Turtle Ridge (petroform in central Brewster County);
- Camp Meyers (historic military outpost in Terrell County);
- Desperation Mesa (prehistoric stone enclosures on the Pinto Canyon Ranch); and
- Warm Spring (Late Archaic buried campsite on the Pinto Canyon Ranch).

In the spring of 2013, Mark flew an aerial mapping mission over Desperation Mesa, a remote and dramatic landform in the far reaches of the Pinto Canyon Ranch. Launched from a desert hilltop, the automated aircraft flew to the distant mesa after crossing a deep canyon. Mark looked on, keeping track of the aircraft's progress on a laptop computer at the launch site. The

resulting photo mosaic provides a more comprehensive visualization of the site than might otherwise be possible. The narrow summit of the isolated mesa is dotted with prehistoric stone rings—structural remnants—and defensive redoubts, suggesting that the landform likely served as a strategic refuge in times of conflict. Mark's aerial imagery adroitly captured the larger distributions and individual characteristics of each of the structures and stone features, providing a prologue to continued research at the site.



*Mark preparing an automated aircraft for a "mission" over Desperation Mesa (left) and photographing rock art at Tablecloth Rockshelter (right).*



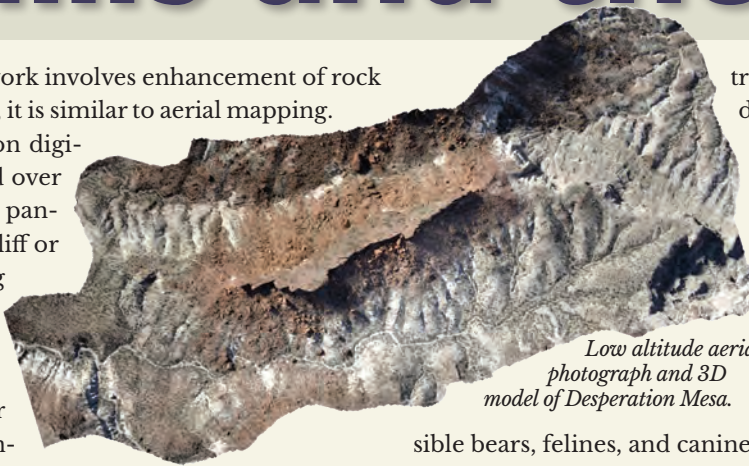
# Mark D. Willis and the CBBS

Another element of Mark's work involves enhancement of rock art imagery. In many regards, it is similar to aerial mapping.

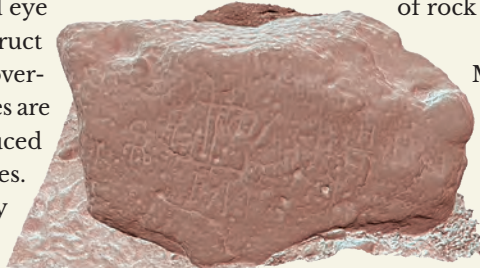
In these cases, high resolution digital photo mosaics are draped over virtual 3D models of rock art panels, be they positioned on a cliff or boulder face, the wall or ceiling of a rockshelter, or a bedrock exposure. Algorithms are applied to color data in digital photographs (with a computer program called *D-Stretch*) to enhance faint pigments and different hues and to contrast various colors. Mark gets similar results applying photogrammetry to petroglyph images, allowing him to tease out subtle and eroded portions of such panels. These processes bring out faded rock art images no longer visible to the naked eye and can, in some instances, help reconstruct sequences of composition and successive overprinting. The resulting enhanced 3D images are a striking complement to imagery produced by traditional documentation techniques. Since rock art images are unfortunately a vanishing resource—succumbing to inevitable erosion and, in some cases, vandalism—Mark's use of these methodologies provides a means of virtually preserving the imagery. For the CBBS in the Trans-Pecos study area, he has applied these techniques to several projects, including efforts at the following sites:

- Tres Yonis (petroglyphs and a pictograph in southern Brewster County);
- Cerro Chino (petroglyphs on the Pinto Canyon Ranch);
- Arroyo Tinaja Blanca Petroglyph Boulder (petroglyphs on the Pinto Canyon Ranch);
- Tablecloth Rockshelter (pictographs and petroglyphs on the Pinto Canyon Ranch); and
- Cosmic Rockshelter (pictographs and petroglyphs on the Pinto Canyon Ranch).

Rock art at Tablecloth Rockshelter (on the Pinto Canyon Ranch) is often difficult to discern, and unless the low, overhanging ceiling is viewed in just the right light, many of the images are nearly invisible. However, working in the low light of a spring afternoon, Mark systematically captured hundreds of digital images on the panel and the surrounding boulder. Later, the photo mosaic was digitally enhanced to accentuate faded colors, and the con-



*Low altitude aerial photograph and 3D model of Desperation Mesa.*



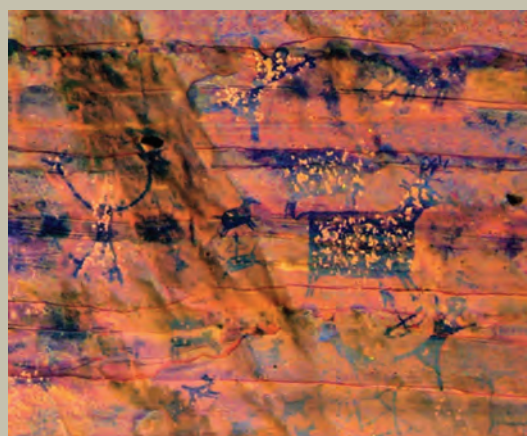
*This graphic 3D model of cupules and linear petroglyphs on the Tinaja Blanca Boulder Petroglyph is generated by a combination of photographs and surface texture mapping.*

trast between the hues adjusted to different values. Further analyses revealed additional, previously indiscernible images, and the art was visible in a new light and greater detail—the tableau of tiny human and animal-like figures, a scene suggestive of hunting magic. More than 40 figures (both pictographs and petroglyphs) include deer, pos-

sible bears, felines, and canines, as well as numerous anthropomorphs with bows, arrows, and headdresses. Through the production of enhanced digital images, Mark's efforts at Tablecloth Rockshelter make it possible to more effectively convey the impact of this prehistoric art to archaeologists and the audience of rock imagery research.

Mark's work provides alternative and complementary techniques that enhance CBBS archaeological investigations in the Big Bend. Whether he finds himself at an 11,000-year-old Paleoindian campsite or on a remote cliff face covered with petroglyph images, the Trans-Pecos is an ideal proving ground for his innovations in archaeological imagery. Likewise, the CBBS benefits hugely from the products of Mark's cutting-edge techniques, be that through his high-quality site maps or enhanced rock art imagery. It is notable that the creative methodologies he has honed in the Trans-Pecos and across the state have led him abroad to the South Pacific, South America, and Paleolithic rock art sites in Europe. The symbiotic relationship established between Mark and the CBBS promises to continue to produce high-quality imagery as the CBBS seeks to unravel the prehistoric and historic mysteries of the greater Big Bend.

—Samuel S. Cason



*Enhanced photo detail of petroglyphs and pictographs at Tablecloth Rockshelter (left) help define nearly indiscernible images. The enhanced motifs (right) convey a scene that appears to depict hunting magic.*



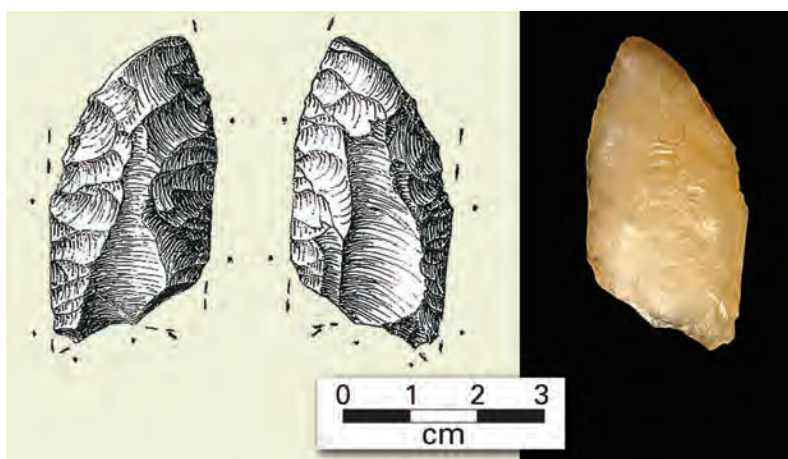
# The First Documented Clovis Projectile Point in Jeff Davis County, Texas

The recent discovery of a Clovis projectile point fragment is the first documented example of the type in Jeff Davis County, Texas. It was found in October 2010 on private property west of Fort Davis in the south-central portion of Jeff Davis County. The point fragment was discovered by Jeff Collins of Fort Davis, who has a long and special interest in projectile points. Thinking he had discovered either a Clovis or Folsom point and understanding its significance, he brought the find to the attention of archaeologists at the Center for Big Bend Studies (CBBS) of Sul Ross State University. CBBS staffers were able to examine the artifact and verified that it was indeed a Clovis point, a projectile point rarely encountered in the eastern Trans-Pecos region.

For the uninitiated, Clovis points are distinctive, fluted, lanceolate-shaped projectile points associated with the Clovis culture, the earliest well-defined human culture in North America. Clovis sites date to the Early Paleoindian period that began around 13,500 years ago. Clovis points were first found in situ with mammoth remains in 1932–1933 along the South Platte River near Dent, Colorado. At the time, they were simply considered to be larger versions of Folsom points, which had been previously discovered (in the late 1920s) near Folsom, New Mexico. However, a second in situ discovery of the larger fluted points was made in 1936 at Blackwater Draw Locality 1, a site near Clovis, New Mexico, revealing they occurred stratigraphically below Folsom points. As a result, the larger fluted points came to be known as Clovis points. Clovis groups are known to have been hunters of megafauna—extinct forms of large bodied animals such as mammoth and giant bison—but recent research at select sites (e.g., the Gault site in Central Texas) indicates they had a generalized hunting-gathering economy. The Clovis culture ended very abruptly, sometime around 13,000 years ago. Interestingly, numerous species of megafauna also became extinct at this time,

suggesting a traumatic event or series of events such as disease, climatic change, or natural disaster. In the eastern Trans-Pecos region, only a handful of these distinctive Clovis points have been found, and all have been isolated surface finds.

The Jeff Davis County point is fragmentary but readily attributable to Clovis origins. Its most distinctive attributes are the flutes that were successfully removed on each face, starting at the base and terminating near the mid-point of the specimen. Heavy edge-grinding occurs on the lower blade edges and base, another characteristic of Clovis points. Although a hinge fracture removed one corner of the base, the intact portion has a concave shape. The blade tip was re-sharpened prior to being broken from an impact fracture. It is fashioned from a high-quality milky-white chalcedony with a slight yellowish tint. Clovis peoples are known for their use of high-quality toolstone, and this specimen is no exception.



(Left) Clovis point: obverse and reverse faces. Drawing by Richard L. McReynolds.  
(Right) Photograph of Clovis point—reverse face.

although no other Clovis-related artifacts were identified. Thus, like the others found in the region, this Clovis point is an isolated find. Despite the lack of evidence for a Clovis campsite, the find suggests Clovis peoples were accessing the distinctive ecological zones in the southern Davis Mountains and adjacent Marfa Plain. Furthermore, the chalcedony from which the point is made most likely was derived locally, as nearby lag gravels of it occur close to the find location and another major source is located in the Frenchman Hills south of Marfa, Texas. While definitive Clovis sites in the region remain elusive, this find provides another clue of the culture's presence and understanding of the landscape. We would like to thank Mr. Collins and the landowner for allowing documentation of this rare find.

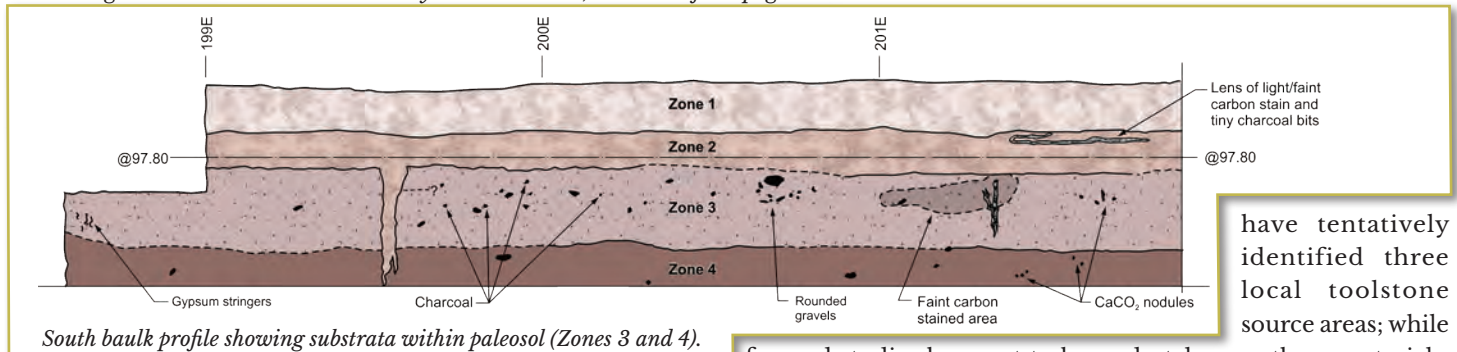
Staff of the CBBS visited and documented the location of the Clovis find,

—Robert W. Gray

## Ellen Sue Turner Memorial Fund

A memorial fund in honor of Ellen Sue Turner has been recently established at the CBBS. Ellen Sue Turner, who passed away several years ago, made many contributions to Texas archaeology, including tireless research of the many projectile point types (dart and arrow points) in the state. With approval of her children, the fund (the Ellen Sue Turner Memorial Fund) will support summer archaeological intern positions at the CBBS. The fund is yet another way that Ellen Sue's name and legacy can contribute to the study of Texas archaeology. Please go to our website (<http://ww2.sulross.edu/cbbs/>) to learn more about the fund or to donate. You can also use the CBBS store on page 15 to make your donation. Please call us at 432-837-8179 if you have any questions.





materials. Most tools recovered thus far can be characterized as “expedient,” that is, they were made cursorily and consist of utilized and/or retouched core fragments and flakes. However, several interesting bifaces unearthed include a small early stage fragment that could be a dart point preform; a well-flaked, long, narrow, and thin fragment missing its proximal end; and, most importantly, a corner-notched dart point with an expanding (“fish-tail”) stem. The latter was recovered next to, and at the same approximate elevation as F-2, tantalizingly suggesting that the point is contemporaneous with this feature that dates to ca. 8050±30 RCYBP.

Geoarchaeological investigations of the aforementioned baulks have revealed the presence of two substrata within a paleosol—a dark-colored buried strata that represents an old stable ground surface—within which the Late Paleoindian deposits reside. It is possible these substrata correlate with earlier and later occupations represented within the deposits, as suggested by radiocarbon dates from the various thermal features in this area of the site.

A few of the research strategies helping to guide the ongoing investigation are identifying sources of toolstone, sampling for phytolith and starch grains, an in-depth study of the FCR present, and residue analyses. Short-range excursions near the site

focused studies have yet to be undertaken on these materials, there are distinct variations in texture, luster, and color, undoubtedly a result of the complex geologic history at this location (i.e., sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic processes). Sampling for phytoliths and starch grains in the units within each 2-cm level is being undertaken to possibly detect the locations of plant processing activities. An analysis of isolated and feature-specific FCR—involving lithology, size, and weight variables—will potentially shed light on cultural preferences and practices through time. And, while residue analysis of a scraper fragment from the site failed to yield results, further efforts in this realm will be attempted on both stone tools and FCR to potentially identify distinctive plant and/or animal markers.

Our progress at the GLD site has been intentionally slow and steady to carefully recover the secrets held within it for millennia. As the earliest dated site in the Big Bend (at ca. 9480±40 RCYBP), and among the earliest documented occurrence of both earth ovens and ground stone in North America, the site merits such diligence and patience. Through our ongoing work at the site, we anticipate further findings will continue to shed new light on Late Paleoindian lifeways in the Big Bend. It is an exciting journey we are on . . . hang on for the ride!

—Richard W. Walter and William A. Cloud

# Thank You!

**Supporters:** Sincere thanks to those foundations, a corporation, and the many individuals who have provided much needed support to the CBBS since the 2012 edition of *La Vista de la Frontera* was published. All donations are greatly appreciated! **Special thanks** are extended to the largest contributors: The Brown Foundation, Inc., of Houston; Jeff Fort; the Semmes Foundation; the Permian Basin Area Foundation; The City of Alpine, Texas; Genevieve Duncan; Cameron and Susan Duncan; Thad Steele; Homer Mills; Meredith Dreiss and Dr. David O. Brown; Kim Lawrence; the Brewster County Tourism Council; an anonymous donor through the Orange County Community Foundation; Century Trailer Company; Edgar and Linda Duncan; George Canon; Pete Peterson; Tom Crum; Virginia Wulfkuhle; Brenda Whorton; Mozelle Jeffrey; Houston Harte; William and Caroline Carrington; Sandra Lowenfield; Dr. David Cockrum; Kathleen Olsen; Dr. Iris Korus; Emily Rauh Pulitzer; Dr. Glen Ely; and the Tierra Grande Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists.

**Volunteers:** Heartfelt thanks to the dedicated and talented volunteers who have assisted the CBBS since the 2012 edition of *La Vista de la Frontera* was published. An impressive number of volunteer hours have been logged in the field and the *J. Charles and Ellen A. Kelley Memorial Library*, and at the CBBS annual conference. Volunteers consist of: Mozelle Jeffery, Bob Mallouf, Benny Roberts, Gena Roberts, Sandy Lynch, Victoria Lowe, Ruth Jansyn, Ann Ohl, Tim Gibbs, Mary Alvarado-Cloud, and Clay Chisholm.

**Professional Volunteers:** A number of professionals have also assisted the CBBS through volunteerism since publication of the last newsletter. These individuals have helped us immensely through their expertise and passionate assistance, and are warmly thanked: Dr. Charles Frederick, Dr. Chet Walker, Mark Willis, Brittney Gregory, and David Yelacic.

**Board Members:** Each and every member of our three boards (CBBS Advisory Council; Friends of the CBBS; and the CBBS Editorial Board) are sincerely thanked for their service! Their assistance with a plethora of tasks has helped the CBBS achieve its many accomplishments.



# The Three Bells of Ojinaga

In April 1993, I was in Ojinaga, Chihuahua, neighbor city to Presidio, Texas. While passing the *plaza de armas* in front of the Nuestro Padre de Jesus Church, my glance registered something askew about the single bell tower that hovered above one corner of the façade. Three bells were situated in separate casements high upon the *campanile*; so placed, it would have been impossible for them to peal. Hmm, thought I. What's the point of displaying bells that cannot toll?

Back in Alpine while performing research for my master's thesis at the Archives of the Big Bend, I had run across a weathered old photograph that depicted an adobe church front with no bell tower; the image portrayed three hefty *campanas* (bells) draped from a cottonwood-log rack in front of a church. The photograph, like so many archival others not identified, was posited in the collection of a Big Bend character from the 1920s who had traveled extensively in post-revolutionary Mexico.<sup>1</sup> Something about the scene at Ojinaga that day resonated with me.

Having read John Reed's *Insurgent Mexico*, it could have been the image Reed painted with words that I best recalled that windblown spring day. Harvard graduate Reed, a reporter for the *Metropolitan* magazine, had been assigned to cover the Mexican Revolution in Chihuahua. His passage across the Big Bend and into legend came simultaneously with the disappearance of the "Old Gringo," Ambrose Bierce, a major nineteenth century American literary figure.<sup>2</sup> Seventy-one-year-old Bierce, who departed Chihuahua City in late December 1913 or early January 1914 for Ojinaga with Constitutionalists under General "Pancho" Villa, intended to observe the fighting at the border town. Nevertheless, he disappeared somewhere along the way, never to resurface. One of the great ironies in the history of American literary personages is that Reed and Bierce may have missed meeting one another by only a few days, or even hours, at Ojinaga.

Reed, through a series of familial adversities as well as fostered acquaintanceships, readings and indoctrination at Cambridge, had become a political leftist. After his Mexican adventure the young man from Portland, Oregon, went to France and Germany in 1917 in order to report World War I; however, upon passing through Russia with Louise Bryant in September, Reed fell in love with that country. He remained a committed Marxist throughout the remainder of his life, dying of typhus in Moscow at age 33. Vladimir Lenin himself approved Reed's burial with honors beside the Kremlin Wall. His greatest work, *Ten Days That Shook the World* (1919), an aperçu of the 1917 October Revolution in Petrograd, influenced thousands; arguably, some consider *Ten Days* to have been the greatest literary emanation from Russia since the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

Reed, on page 3 of *Insurgent Mexico*, described the Ojinaga church, formerly a federal stronghold but by mid-January held by Constitutionalists, as having three "enormous Spanish bells hanging on a rack outside and a cloud of blue incense crawling out of the black doorway."<sup>4</sup> As I had nothing more than a xerographic copy of the archival picture that day in 1993, it was a relief to find the church office open. Upon entering I noticed, suspended upon the wall, a black-and-white photograph of the *iglesia* Nuestro Padre de Jesus. Out front were suspended Reed's "enormous Spanish bells." The archival photograph and the Ojinaga church seemed to be one and the same.

The local Catholic priest, unsure about the three bells, granted permission that I, along with an escort, could climb the belfry and perform an inspection. So doing, I observed five bells. Two bells were freely suspended and in current use. The others, however, remained situated in arched windows along the exterior walls; these, it turned out, were cast in 1893 at Ojinaga and were the bells described by Reed in *Insurgent Mexico*. Fortunately, someone in the past had enough foresight to realize the importance of the artifacts and had them mounted on high, rather than consigned to scrap.

In Mexico, almost every community has one or several historians (*cronistas*), either officially designated or otherwise. In Ojinaga, the church Nuestro Padre de Jesus had Sr. Benjamin Nieto, to whose home I was directed. It was Nieto who confirmed that the three bells were the same which dominated the church front during the Mexican Revolution. *Las campanas* are individually nominated: the Sacred Heart of Jesus (el Sagrado Corazon de Jesus), the Virgin of Refuge (La Virgen del Refugio), and the smaller of the three, El Refugio. Nieto also confirmed Reed's account by stating that the antique doors of the church had been locked to the federals when they entered Ojinaga in December 1913; in response, the *Huertistas* (federals) set fire to the old portal and gutted the entranceway. It was a cold January. One suspects the "blue incense crawling out of the black doorway" to have been more the result of campfires set within the cavern rather than incense. Reed, like most effective journalists, was known to puff his images from time to time.

Nuestro Padre de Jesus is situated upon the site of the original Mission Santiago del Norte. The revolution-era building was built in "1870 or 1880" but was refurbished in 1960 by brothers of the Order of Josefinos from Mexico City. A bell tower was added. Current appearance and additional modifications to the structure are a result of those efforts.

The church, situated upon the main plaza along with the municipal palace adjacent to what was almost certainly old Presidio

1. TV. Skaggs Collection, Archives of the Big Bend, Sul Ross State University, Box 3 folder 43.

2. Fonda Films, *Old Gringo*, 1989.

3. Ian Frazier, "John Reed's Unblinking Stare," *The American Scholar* (Summer 2002), 29–39.

4. John Reed, *Insurgent Mexico*, 1914 Reprint, New York: Simon & Schuster, Clarion Books, 3.

*Photo courtesy of the Skaggs Collection, Archives of the Big Bend, Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library, Sul Ross State University.*



del Norte—the highest and most defensible ground available—represents part of a cultural theme in Mexico. Called “*la plaza de armas*,” or more simply “*la plaza*,” the setting denotes the central part of town. It is generally the location of the seat of government as well as of religion and, often, of business. Gaston Bachelard, in his book *Poetics of Space*, repeatedly suggests that an oneiric, or “dream” house, grows from the inside out.<sup>5</sup> So ripens a Mexican village, town or city. A primary objective in any war that takes place within Mexico is to “take” the plaza, i.e., the heart (or womb?) of the city. That done, the conquest is considered complete.

Such was the case in December 1913 when Federal General Salvador Mercado had retreated from an untenable position at Chihuahua City following the Constitutionalist victories at Juárez and Tierra Blanca. Mercado was no fool. While his passage to Ojinaga was unopposed, the general realized that Villa’s power increased with every Constitutionalist victory. Unless Villa personally led the attack, and perhaps even if he did, the plaza in Ojinaga should be impregnable. Conversely, should the “bandits” prevail, Mercado and his troops could withdraw across the Rio Grande and, if precedent meant anything, be transported by rail on United States soil to Laredo where his army might re-cross into Mexico and again support the usurper General Victoriano Huerta.

Villa sent two generals to take Ojinaga: Panfilo Natera of Zacatecas and Chihuahua native Toribio Ortega. For about two weeks, the generals worked at taking the town. They failed to do so. Yet Ojinaga had to be taken. The Constitutionalist route to victory lay to the south, not the north. Pancho Villa realized he could not leave a substantial enemy force at his back and thereby invite a two-front contest. Villa, now military governor of Chihuahua, became discomfited at the failure of his generals. He left the capital city on or about January 7 and came north halfway toward Ojinaga by train, the rest by horseback, arriving on January 9, 1914. Next day the Constitutionlists, now led by Villa himself, attacked. The timing, just after darkness set in, was perfect. In less than two hours, Mercado’s army began to fall back in what would become a sweep of the federal defenses. The plaza at Ojinaga had been hotly contested, and the dead would be tallied in the hundreds.

Ambrose Bierce may have been among those who fell. Nonetheless, a more plausible scenario for his demise has more recently surfaced. A few days before Christmas, 1913, Bierce wrote his now famous “last letter” to a lady friend in Washington, D.C. In the text he states, “If you hear that I have been stood up against a Mexican stone wall and shot to rags know that I think it a pretty good way to depart this life. It beats disease, old age or falling down the cellar stairs. To be a gringo in Mexico, ah, that is euthanasial!” Bierce, an asthmatic, had been hospitalized at New Orleans a month earlier after being caught outside during a driving rainstorm. He was susceptible to changes in weather. In all likelihood, Bierce had set out for Ojinaga—as he had indicated he would in the letter—with *Villista* troops (not with General Villa himself). The winter of 1913 was a cold one plagued with frigid “northers.” My research has shown that the Orient Railway, which construction

had been abandoned in 1912 due to the fighting, was complete only so far as San Sostenes, Chihuahua, a watering station about halfway between the capital and the Rio Grande. Had Bierce become ill en route, no medical services would have been available to him, as Mexican armies had no medical corps at the time.

Had Bierce died along the way, he would probably have been buried at the end of the line, San Sostenes. A dearth of records in the *municipio* precludes evidence of burials; additionally, no record exists of his having been at Ojinaga on or about 9 or 10 January 1914. The theory of Bierce having been transported to Marfa, Texas, where he died and was buried, has been discredited.

John Reed, however, rode along with Villa for a time gathering material for his book, *Insurgent Mexico*. The rest is history. And the three silent bells of Ojinaga remain witnesses to it all.

—Glenn P. Willeford

*Glenn P. Willeford, M.A., is a historian and historical novelist. His five published books include the 2011 novel The Last Peace Officer, and Zephyr, published in 2012 under the pseudonym “A.Z. Hays.” The author resides in Old Mexico.*



This incredible 16-foot tall sculpture shown above is the work of Hershall Seals, Chairman of the Art Department at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. It is displayed on private property in Oakville, Texas, between Corpus Christi and San Antonio. Mr. Seals uses stylized anthropomorphic forms commonly known as “shaman” in much of his art. Numerous ancient cultures used similar stylized figures in their pictographs and petroglyphs to depict human/spirit-like entities; pictographs of Pecos River style rock art often include such figures and many researchers think they depict peyote-induced spirit journeys. The Oakville Shaman is shown on a quest with an atlatl and spear, the destination and purpose is left for the viewer to ponder.

5. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994. First published in French as *La poétique de l'espace* by Presses Universitaires de France, 1958), 68, 101, 229.





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Graphic design by Letitia Wetterauer.

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## Mission

The Center for Big Bend Studies fosters interdisciplinary scholarship of the diverse prehistoric, historic, and modern cultures of the borderlands region of the United States and Mexico, with emphasis on the area encompassed by Trans-Pecos Texas and north-central Mexico. The Center is committed to the recovery, protection, and sharing of this region's rich cultural legacy through dynamic programs involving research, education, public outreach, and publication.

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*Our Canyon Home: The Settling of Pinto Canyon, continued from page 2.*

These things would follow. But like the calm before the storm, there were a handful of years that offered hope, that offered promise, that offered a vision of a better future. In this way, Pinto Canyon was a microcosm of the larger theatre that was the Big Bend, but one whose tortured backdrop so appropriately reflected the harsh drama that would play out within its folds.

—David W. Keller

*To learn more, watch for the forthcoming book on the history of Pinto Canyon to be published in the near future.*



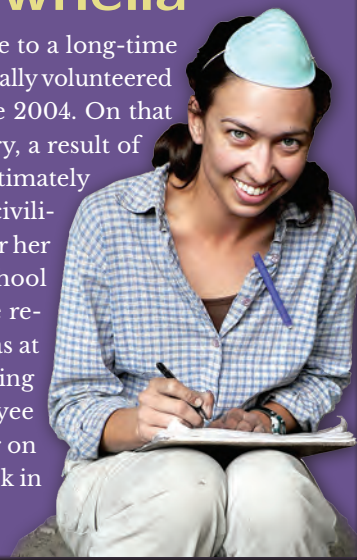
*José Prieto and daughter Frances on the Prieto Ranch in Pinto Canyon ca. 1935. Courtesy of the Prieto Family Collection.*



*Pinto Canyon, looking south towards the Chinatis. Photo by David Keller.*

## Good Luck, Dawnella

It is with much sadness that we say goodbye to a long-time staff member, Dawnella Petrey. Dawnella initially volunteered with the CBBS almost 10 years ago, in June 2004. On that project we were stranded in the backcountry, a result of an intense rain and lightning storm, and ultimately had to build road before making it back to civilization. That eventful beginning did not deter her though, as she returned to take a Field School course held at Wolf Den Cave in 2006. She received her B.A. from The University of Texas at San Antonio that same year and began working for the CBBS and has been a valued employee ever since. Circumstances have now led her on another path and we wish her the best of luck in these endeavors. We will miss her!





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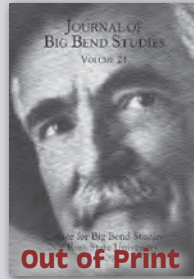
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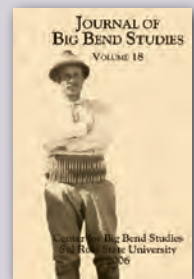
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## CBBS T-Shirts

Featuring rock art from the Big Bend's Tablecloth Rockshelter, the CBBS t-shirts were designed by our former graphic illustrator, Avram Dumitrescu, and are produced in Alpine, Texas. Available in green or khaki, adult sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL and youth sizes S, M, and L.

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