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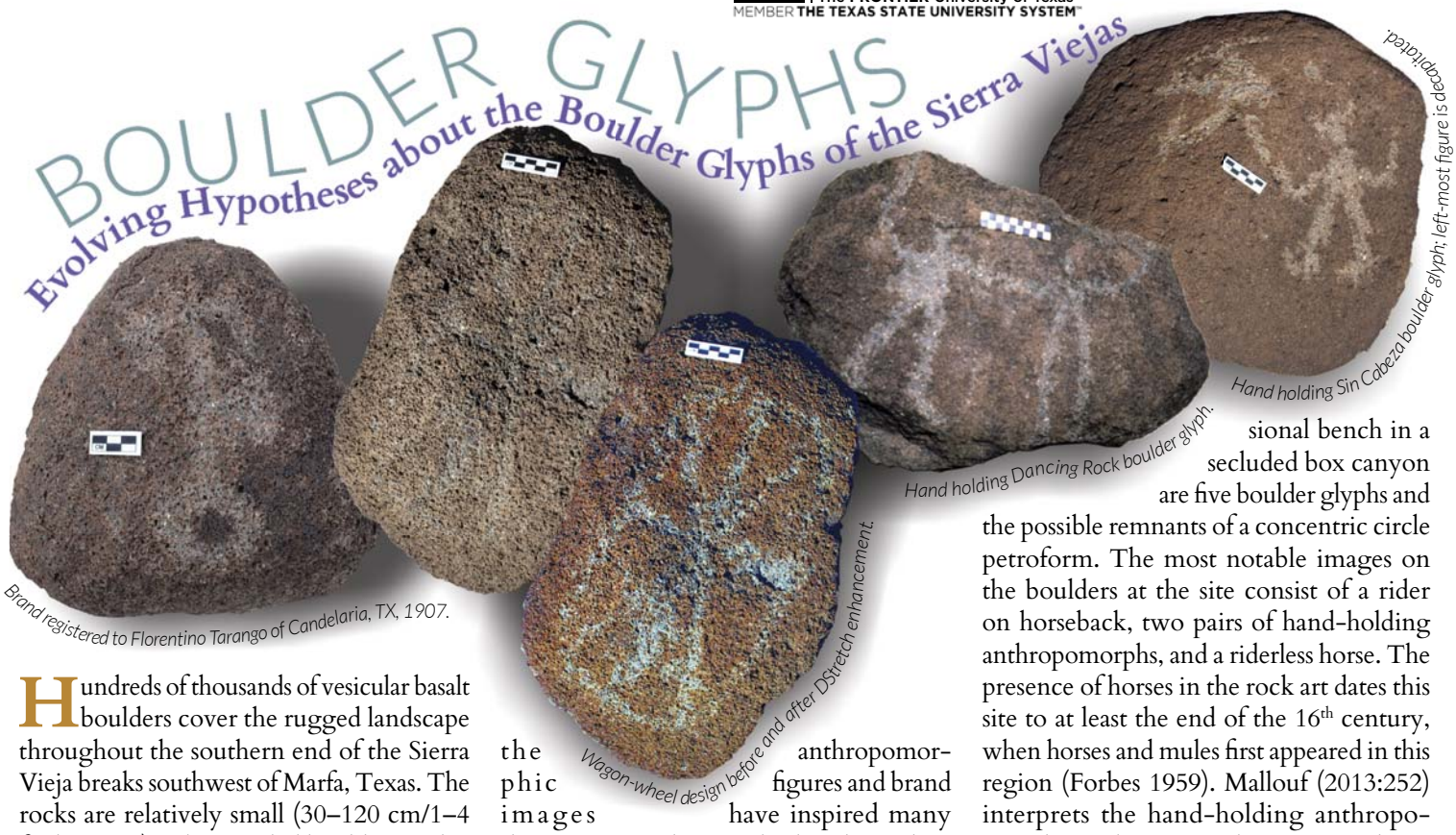
BOULDER GLYPHS

Evolving Hypotheses about the Boulder Glyphs of the Sierra Viejas



Brand registered to Florentino Tarango of Candelaria, TX, 1907.

Wagon-wheel design before and after DStretch enhancement.

Hand holding Dancing Rock boulder glyph.

Hand holding Sin Cabeza boulder glyph; left-most figure is decapitated.

Hundreds of thousands of vesicular basalt boulders cover the rugged landscape throughout the southern end of the Sierra Vieja breaks southwest of Marfa, Texas. The rocks are relatively small (30–120 cm/1–4 ft. diameter), sub-rounded boulders with a dark blackish- to reddish-brown and jagged cortex. Despite the thousands of boulders we only know of roughly 200 with images pecked onto the rough surface.

We began a thorough investigation and documentation of these boulder glyphs in the fall of 2018. Since then we have scientifically recorded over 150 of the approximately 200 known boulder glyphs. The recorded petroglyph images span from anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures to abstract/geometric designs as well as historic brands and letters. The boulder glyphs are generally situated on the tops of ridgelines, small mesas, and low rises above the arroyo floors—juxtaposing highly visible and private settings—and are concentrated within 4–5 miles of the Rio Grande. The locations of the boulder glyphs along with the anthropomorphic figures and brand images have inspired many theories as to the standard "who, what, when, and why" questions.

There are multiple reasons why people from different time periods and ethnicities would choose to mark basalt boulders in this region. Because the Rio Grande is a major river, its banks served as a travel corridor for many cultures during prehistory. In the last century and a half, the Rio Grande has also functioned as an international border with people crossing the river regularly for work and to visit family. Through time, this swirl of people and lifeways in the area makes this project both fascinating and difficult.

A prevailing idea for the production of boulder petroglyphs in this area was proposed by Robert Mallouf in his 2013 article about a site he called "Dancing Rocks Petroglyphs"—the first boulder glyphs site discovered in the region. Perched on an erosional bench in a secluded box canyon are five boulder glyphs and the possible remnants of a concentric circle petroform. The most notable images on the boulders at the site consist of a rider on horseback, two pairs of hand-holding anthropomorphs, and a riderless horse. The presence of horses in the rock art dates this site to at least the end of the 16th century, when horses and mules first appeared in this region (Forbes 1959). Mallouf (2013:252) interprets the hand-holding anthropomorphs as dancers and compares these, along with the horse-on-rider motif, to other Historic Indian rock art in the region. The sheltered setting of the site, along with historical documentation of Apaches and Comanches roaming the area, lead him to believe that this site is evidence of Historic Indians acting out ritual aspects of their life, possibly after a horse raid of nearby villages.

When the owner and manager of Pinto Canyon Ranch began to discover more boulder glyphs around 2014, it became increasingly evident that there was more to the picture—that the people making the images appeared to be more diverse in their motives if not their culture. This broader array of boulder glyphs included a far greater percentage of livestock brands and initials than anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures. The discovery of boulder glyphs

marked with Milton Faver's and Ruchard Spencer's brands—some of the oldest (1880s–1900s) in Presidio County—seemed to lend more evidence to the idea that these glyphs may reflect Historic Indian raids and their subsequent retreat into the Sierra Vieja breaks. The Apaches are documented in the region until the 1880s, and were notorious for their livestock raids against nearby Vado de Piedra and the villages at La Junta (present-day Presidio/Ojinaga). Perhaps they pecked the brands of the livestock they stole on boulders situated on visible landforms as a form of braggadocio or even as a territory marker. However, this hypothesis does not explain the pecked brands that date to the mid-20th century.

Although the boulder glyph recording and survey is not complete, preliminary research and observations have proved insightful. For one, there are a number of boulder glyphs located near old fence lines. Perhaps after a stretch of hard labor, building fence lines and observing boulder glyphs along the way, ranch hands took a break and pecked something that they identified with—their family brand or the brand of the outfit they work for. Such a behavior may also have been practiced along old trails both during prehistoric and historic times.

In addition to brands there are also many enigmatic petroglyphs that include geometric and linear shapes, as well as other figures either indescribable or undecipherable. Some of the geometric and abstract designs have been compared to regional and American Southwest rock art. Though similarities do exist, presently no clear connections can be made. There are a few repetitive enigmatic designs, the most notable of which is the window-like design present on three different boulders, all located above a major drainage within a half mile of each other.

Another interesting observation is that many of the anthropomorphic figures appear similar to the "dancing" figures at the Dancing Rocks Petroglyphs site—holding hands with their free hands stretched upward. However, because there are also a number of isolated anthropomorphic figures wielding a club, stick, or long knife in their outstretched hands it seems likely that many of these "dancing" figures are actually fighting. An example of this depicted violence can be seen at the Sin Cabeza site (PCR-1048).

The Sin Cabeza site consists of six boulder glyphs within a 5-m area, all with anthropomorphic figures depicted on the surfaces of boulders. Four of the seven anthropomorphic figures do not have heads, and the majority of the headless figures appear lifeless. The largest boulder in the site has two anthropomorphic figures holding hands and also holding what appear to be weapons. One of the two hand-holding figures is decapitated and the other is wearing a horned headdress.

Another boulder bearing an anthropomorphic figure with one arm raised, possibly holding a weapon, is propped up above a flat lying boulder portraying an anthropomorphic figure with his/her arms outstretched above their decapitated head, perhaps to give the illusion that a victor is standing over the deceased. Scattered nearby are two boulders with individual headless figures depicted, draped and lifeless upon the boulders. To the south side of the Sin Cabeza site is another horned figure holding a weapon as if securing the perimeter of the scene.

It appears that the boulders at the Sin Cabeza site were utilized almost like a child's plastic toy soldiers, positioned to reenact a violent conflict. There are no horses or guns depicted on any of the boulders, suggesting that these glyphs likely predate European contact and would therefore indicate indigenous conflict.

As we continue to discover and interpret these enigmatic features, a number of modern tools are helping. One such tool is the mobile phone app DStretch. Although DStretch is a program designed to enhance faint pictograph images, we discovered that it also works at enhancing the boulder petroglyphs, allowing us to better analyze the glyphs while still in the field. Another tool that will better help us in understanding the function and temporal context of the boulder glyphs is through metal detecting. Once we have completed recording the boulder glyphs we will target select sites to systematically metal detect, including the Sin Cabeza and Dancing Rocks Petroglyph sites.

(Continued on page 14)

Emma Ruthenbeck recording glyphs.

CBBS REPRESENTATIVE ATTENDS METAL DETECTING CLASS

Long the bane of traditional archeologists as a tool of the casual looter, in recent years metal detectors have gained wider acceptance among professional archeologists as they have proven their utility in surveying historic period sites. On September 20th–22nd, CBBS senior project archaeologist David Keller attended a 24-credit course in Advanced Metal Detecting for the Archaeologist (AMDA) at Guadalupe Mountains National Park (GUMO). Among the four instructors were Charles Hacker and Chris Adams, both pioneers in the use of metal detecting—most notably on Historic Indian campsites and battle sites across the Southwest. Following a day of classroom instruction on the history of metal detecting in archaeology, methodological protocols, and several case studies where detectors were employed, the class of 19 students (some from as far away as Alaska) spent the next two days metal detecting what is believed to be an Apache encampment (and possibly also a battle site) in McKittrick Canyon at GUMO. Notably, there was no surface expression of an encampment—no hearths, cairns, or other features, and very few stone tools. But the detectors revealed that just below the surface (usually within the top 5 cm) were dozens of metallic artifacts believed related to an Apache encampment dating to ca. 1850–1880. A total of 111 artifacts were recovered, including 9 brass tinklers, 2 percussion caps, several cut horseshoe nails, cut tin, a wrought nail, bullet fragments, melted lead, and a possible gun part in addition to several pieces of worked bottle glass. As a result of the class, the CBBS will be purchasing two high-quality metal detectors and folding their use into our standard survey methodology for historic period sites.

AMDA class in McKittrick Canyon at Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Photo by David Keller.

—David W. Keller

Update from Spirit Eye Cave: Pleistocene Ground Sloths in the Trans-Pecos

This year, research at Spirit Eye has focused on writing up the previous year's excavation as well as expanding the focus of the research to include other sheltered sites. The expanded focus also seeks collaboration with outside researchers to help us understand more than just the cultural occupation at caves like Spirit Eye. The sheltered sites of West Texas preserve climate, insect, environmental, and pollen records that are of critical importance to science. It was in this spirit that collaboration began with Dr. Jim Mead, a Pleistocene paleontologist and research director of the Mammoth site in Hot Springs, South Dakota.

Over the course of the initial excavation work at Spirit Eye, a fiber level was encountered while placing a permanent mapping datum in Shaft B of the cave. This fiber level returned two Clovis-aged calendar dates (13,000 years old). To better understand if these deposits were cultural or natural, I reached out to Clovis researchers and their consensus was the fiber mat was most likely Pleistocene dung.

This is where Dr. Jim Mead enters the equation. He was described to me by more than one peer as "the number 1 at number 2." That is because he is the leading expert in the analysis of dung, and the go-to for Pleistocene-age dung samples from sites like Bechan Cave in Utah and Rampart Cave in Arizona. I sent a small fragment of the fiber sample from Spirit Eye to Dr. Mead who believed it to be from a Shasta Ground sloth (*Nothrotheriops shastensis*). But he needed a larger sample to make sure. After receiving a second sample from the surface of Shaft A, he was able to make a positive identification and dated the sample at a remarkable 30,000 years old. Having piqued his interest, he wanted to see the deposit for himself.

In October of this year, I set out with Jim Mead and Drew Stuart, author of the show *Nature Notes* on Marfa Public Radio, to see if Spirit Eye Cave contained more sloth dung. After firing up the generator that powered the lights at the cave, I showed Jim where the 13,000 year old dung was found buried in Shaft B. We then moved over to Shaft A where the 30,000 year old piece of dung was recovered from the surface. There we found a large buried packrat midden that contained numerous masses of sloth dung. We also tried to recover more of the buried fiber mat from Shaft B but were unable to locate additional pieces. It turns out, the datum had been placed perfectly to reveal a trampled mat of dung. Dr. Mead thinks as the cave was used, sloth pushed dung to the sides of the cave where he expects more will be located.

While the analysis of the packrat midden is still underway, Dr. Mead feels certain that most of the dung masses recovered are juvenile-sized fragments. Because these materials were collected from at least two Pleistocene packrat middens, their analysis will give us a climatic window into the end of the Pleistocene. When the radiocarbon dates are back in early January, Dr. Mead will have a better idea of the chronology of sloth dung and the contents of the packrat midden. The results of this work will be published in a national journal and should go a long way toward helping us understand the environmental conditions during the arrival of the very first peoples into West Texas.

Dr. Jim Mead of the Hot Springs Mammoth Site showing Bryon Schroeder the diagnostic attributes of Sloth Dung cemented in a packrat midden (photo by Drew Stuart).

—Bryon Schroeder and Jim Mead

Archaeological Research on the Boot Ranch

Starting in February of 2019, CBBS senior project archaeologist David Keller began conducting archaeological investigations at the Boot Ranch about 15 miles northeast of Alpine. Centered around a cluster of low limestone hills, the ranch is unique geologically in exposing Cretaceous-aged deposits on the edge of the Davis Mountains volcanic field. For that reason, there were certain expectations regarding the ranch's prehistoric occupation—namely, that it might have offered a unique suite of resources not as readily available in the adjacent volcanic deposits. While still in its preliminary stages, over 1,000 acres have been surveyed and over 65 sites recorded consisting mostly of prehistoric open campsites and food processing sites. In addition, nine thermal features have been tested and radiocarbon samples collected that demonstrate a range of occupation spanning some 5,000 years. Indeed, the oldest date extends back to the latter portion of the Early Archaic whereas the youngest was A.D. 1565—only 30 years after Cabeza de Vaca passed through La Junta. In the coming months, as additional survey is conducted and additional features sampled, we expect the span of occupation and the range of material culture to expand further. Stay tuned!

Boot Ranch Headquarters. Photo by David Keller.

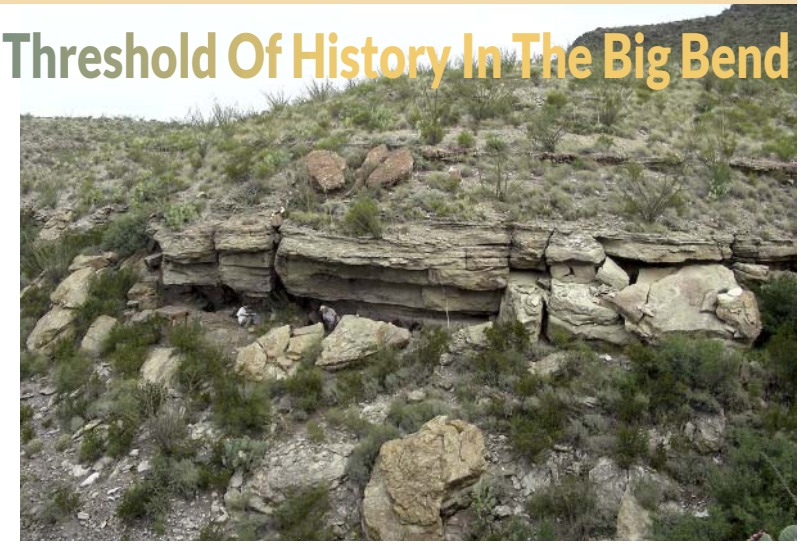
—David W. Keller

Rough Cut Rockshelter: On The Threshold Of History In The Big Bend

During the summer and fall of 2007, the Center for Big Bend Studies (CBBS) conducted archaeological excavations at Rough Cut Rockshelter on the 02 Ranch in Brewster County, Texas. This investigation was carried out as part of the Center's Trans-Pecos Archaeological Program (TAP), a long-standing interdisciplinary research effort focused on reconstructing and preserving the prehistory and history of Far West Texas and north-central Mexico.

Rough Cut Rockshelter was discovered by 02 Ranch manager Homer Mills in 2005, and was formally recorded by former CBBS director Robert Mallouf in 2006. This moderate-sized (15 meters wide x 4 meters deep), well-elevated rockshelter faces south and offers excellent visibility across Green Valley, an extensive basin that encompasses the upper and middle reaches of the Terlingua Creek drainage system. The crescent-shaped shelter contains large roof-fall blocks, and there is an impressive fan-shaped accumulation of burned rock, ash, and chipped stone refuse on the steep slope below the shelter opening.

Rock art is present on the ceiling and back wall, and the shelter floor contains the remains of a possible stone-based dwelling. During its initial recording, the steep debris-covered slope in front of the shelter was observed to have Late Prehistoric Perdiz and Livermore arrow points, a few ceramic sherds, and grinding tools such as manos and metates. The ceramics included both decorated and plain wares. Based on the evidence at the time, it was suspected that Rough Cut might have a stratified sequence of occupations with the potential to contribute to our reconstruction of Late Prehistoric lifeways in the Big Bend.

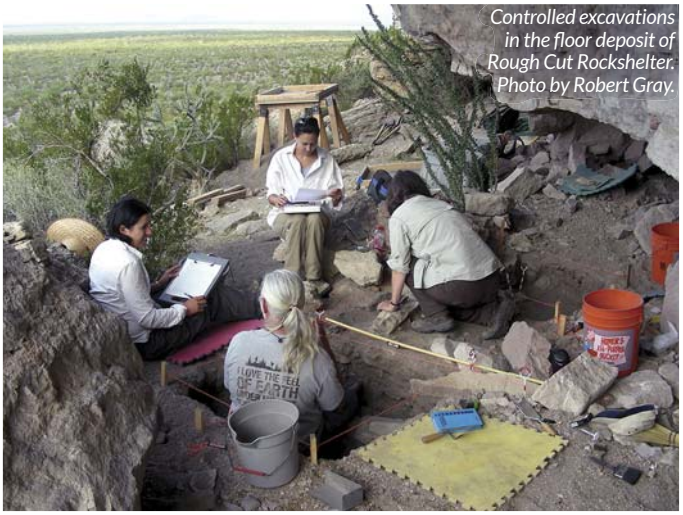

Looking northwest at Rough Cut Rockshelter in Brewster County, Texas. Photo by Robert Gray.

Test excavations at the site were initiated in 2007 under the direction of CBBS staff archaeologist Robert Gray. Among other goals, research was directed at obtaining information concerning the succession of cultures during late prehistory, and gaining insight into the relationships of regional ceramic styles and stone tools.

The first phase of excavation revealed a stratified Late Prehistoric sequence of occupations. While many regional rockshelters contain Late Prehistoric cultural deposits, such deposits typically are compressed and mixed, making the separation of occupation episodes difficult or impossible. In contrast, at Rough Cut, individual occupations could be stratigraphically delineated, greatly enhancing the research value of the site.

During the second phase of work, the original test excavations were expanded revealing three distinct types of thermal features—a small burned rock hearth, a layer of carbon stained sediment with charcoal, and a white ash deposit—all of which were carefully exposed and explored. The hearth and carbon sediment layer yielded Perdiz and Cliffton arrow points, and importantly, a few sherds of El Paso Polychrome pottery—all in direct association. This is the first demonstrated cultural linkage of these points with ceramics in the Big Bend region.

Radiocarbon assays on charcoal from the three thermal features yielded a date range of



Controlled excavations in the floor deposit of Rough Cut Rockshelter. Photo by Robert Gray.

Examples of Perdiz and Cliffton arrow points recovered in excavations at Rough Cut Rockshelter. Photo by Robert Gray.

A.D. 1290–1450 for the multiple occupations at the shelter, with a more precise date of A.D. 1410–1450 established for the hearth having associated arrow points and pottery. A total of 165 arrow points were recovered with Perdiz (n=81) easily dominating the assemblage, followed by Toyah (n=16), Cliffton (n=6), and Fresno (n=5). Arrow point fragments and preforms made up the remainder of the point assemblage.

Interestingly, three worked flakes of obsidian (volcanic glass) were also recovered. Through X-ray fluorescence analysis (XRF), these flakes were shown to have originated from obsidian outcrops in southwestern New Mexico (Antelope Wells) and north-central Chihuahua (Las Jagueyes), Mexico (Shackley 2010; 2019).

Partial, mostly disarticulated remains of a human skeleton were encountered below the stacked rock inside the shelter. They included a left lower arm, a right lower leg, and the feet of an adult male that appeared to be positioned intentionally within and beneath the stacked rock (Piehl 2008). A slab metate had been placed over the long bones. A bone collagen assay of A.D. 1450–1530 was obtained from the remains (Cummings 2009), thus linking this individual to what was probably the last occupation of the shelter. In some respects, this burial mirrors a rock-lined pit burial (Rough Run burial site) from Big Bend National Park, where the interred remains were primarily long bones, feet, and hands, although the skull was also interred there (Cloud 2002). Like the interment at Rough Cut shelter, the national park burial, which contained 72 associated Perdiz arrow points, dates to roughly A.D. 1450.

Over 7,000 specimens of animal bone were recovered at the site, and analysis revealed that 998 are from identifiable species (Willet 2008). Some 20% of the bone shows evidence of burning. Easily the most common animal represented is rabbit (both jackrabbit and cottontail), which indicates a definitive food resource and inferred foraging pattern. Two bone specimens, both from deer or antelope, were fashioned into tools.

Plant macrofossil analysis of floral remains from Rough Cut indicate that the occupants were making use of a range of wild plants including grass seeds, agaves, little walnut, yucca, prickly pear, cholla, and mesquite (Dering 2009). Evidently the local plant taxa have not changed markedly since the Late Prehistoric period, and the rockshelter probably saw intermittent use as flowering and fruiting patterns shifted seasonally.

With respect to cultural affiliation, the prehistoric inhabitants of Rough Cut shelter appear linked most closely to the Cielo complex (Mallouf 1985, 1999) and/or Toyah phase (Kenmotsu and Boyd 2012; Johnson 1994). Perdiz and Cliffton points, along with a suite of other tool forms, are hallmarks of both archaeological constructs. Over 70 sites in the general area of Rough Cut contain stone-based wickiup structures typical of the Cielo complex, and one such site lies directly above the shelter. However, ceramics are atypical of Cielo complex, and when found in those of the Toyah phase they are typically of different ceramic types. This intriguing interpretive problem is only one of many posed by this important archaeological site. Rough Cut shelter continues to be a significant source of information concerning the subsistence, technology, trade, and environment of indigenous populations just prior to the arrival of the Spanish (about A.D. 1535) in the Big Bend.

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—Robert W. Gray and Robert J. Mallouf

The CBBS Partners with the University of Kansas to Reexamine San Esteban Rockshelter

In collaboration with the CBBS the University of Kansas Odyssey Archaeological Research Program began excavations at the San Esteban Rockshelter (41PS20) south of Marfa. Fieldwork began on June 17, 2019 and continued through the first week in July. This year's work will be followed by two additional field seasons scheduled in 2020 and 2021. San Esteban Rockshelter is a State Antiquities Landmark (SAL) administered by the Texas Historical Commission on property owned by the Bar Triangle Ranch, LLC. The goal of the collaborative excavation and research is to reconstruct the formation of the rockshelter and determine if it was ever occupied by early Paleoindian groups and the extent of those occupations if they exist.

San Esteban Rockshelter has been visited by numerous research parties in the last century as outlined in an article published in 2016 by CBBS archaeologist Roger Boren. The first recorded visit was in 1906 by the antiquarian Charles Peabody of the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, followed by E.B. Sayles, A.T. Jackson and Forrest Kirkland in the 1930s, and finally by Miriam Lowrance, a fine-arts professor at Sul Ross State University who recorded some of the rock art found in the shelter.

In 2000, the Texas Archeological Society (TAS) and the CBBS conducted a joint field school at San Esteban focused on the recordation of the rock art as well as limited subsurface testing in the rockshelter. Excavation went to a depth of about 1 m and revealed well-stratified deposits and considerable perishable material, as well as intact sediments that appeared to date to the Middle Archaic.

Given the size and location of the San Esteban Rockshelter, plus the availability of water at the site, we assumed there was a high potential for stratified Archaic and Paleoindian cultural deposits. Over the past 100 years, looters disturbed much of the site, but the depth of disturbance was thought to be limited to the upper meter of rockshelter deposits. Over the 2019 field season we deepened and expanded the units excavated by TAS and CBBS in 2000 with a goal of finding bedrock in the shelter. We had mixed results.

The initial focus of the summer's work was a large trench placed in the front portion of the shelter after removing numerous large roof fall blocks. However, we found

Justin Garnet, Chris Hord, Mason Niquette, Rolfe Mandel, Bryon Schroeder, and Bob Mallouf looking at the 2000 TAS excavation area in San Esteban Rockshelter.

Aeriel Photo of excavation at San Esteban Rockshelter.

Final mapping and profiles being drawn at the end of the first year of excavation at San Esteban Rockshelter.

little in the way of cultural material. But while expanding the 2000 TAS test units we hit pay dirt. To our surprise a large portion of the shelter remains intact despite years of unauthorized/casual collecting. Subsequent radiocarbon dates confirm that many of the deposits representing historic through Late Archaic occupations in the shelter are preserved! Of particular note, was a range of perishable artifacts including sandals, Late Archaic corncobs, and a painted deer rib.

The objective of the 2020 fieldwork will be to excavate down to bedrock in this portion of the cave, in hope of exposing Paleoindian deposits in the lowest strata. Given what remains preserved within the shelter, it is still possible we have intact and fully-stratified deposits from the historic down to the Paleoindian period, a major finding given the history of the rockshelter. This research would not have been possible without access granted by the Bar Triangle Ranch and the University of Kansas Odyssey Archeological Research Fund and team. Look for more good things to come.

—Bryon Schroeder

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In Memoriam: Lonn Taylor

Lonn and Dedie Taylor at Porvenir in 2015. Photo by David Keller.

Longtime CBBS supporter and past chairman of the CBBS Advisory Council, Lonn W. Taylor, passed away on June 26, 2019 at his home in Fort Davis. A prolific writer and historian, Taylor was curator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History for nearly 20 years before his retirement. Taylor was best known locally for his weekly column and radio show, "the Rambling Boy," which was published weekly in The Big Bend Sentinel and aired the following morning on Marfa Public Radio. Each column detailed stories about Texas, filled with Lonn's characteristic southern drawl and jovial wit.

Born in South Carolina in 1940, as a young child his family moved to the Philippines before relocating to Fort Worth in the 1950s where Taylor completed high school. After graduating from Texas Christian University in 1961 he briefly moved to New York City where he enrolled in a graduate program in Southeast Asian studies before returning to Texas to attend a summer class in Austin. Shortly after, however, he abandoned his academic studies and worked the next few years as a speech writer, exhibit curator, and journalist.

Between 1965 and 1969 Taylor conducted graduate research at the University of Texas in history, museology, and historic preservation. In 1970, he became the curator of the Winedale Historical Complex where he, along with David B. Warren, completed *Texas Furniture: The Cabinetmakers and Their Work, 1840–1880*. Taylor later served as a curator for the Dallas Historical Society and the American Folklife Center and directed the New Mexico Furniture History Project at the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe. In 1984 he joined the staff of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, where he worked for the next 18 years conducting research, directing, and curating exhibits. During this period, he published two books, including *The Star Spangled Banner: The Flag that Inspired the National Anthem*.

In 2002, following his retirement, he and his wife Dedie moved to Fort Davis. Lonn was an original member of the Friends of the CBBS board and from 2004 to 2008, he served as chairman of the CBBS Advisory Council. Lonn was also a long standing member of the CBBS Editorial Board and frequently presented at CBBS conferences and contributed articles and reviews to the *Journal of Big Bend Studies*. Taylor's local fame, however, arose from his weekly column and radio show, which provided fodder for his books, *Texas, My Texas, Turning the Pages of Texas, and Marfa for the Perplexed*. Shortly before his death, Taylor completed a memoir about his childhood in the Philippines. Outgoing CBBS director, Andy Cloud, noted, "Lonn remained actively involved with the CBBS until his death. He was an excellent historian and became a part of the Big Bend's history himself." Indeed, Lonn's infectious laughter and larger-than-life personality will be missed by us all.

Cloud Retires After Nearly a Quarter Century

William A. (Andy) Cloud began his tenure with the CBBS as a staff archaeologist on September 1, 1995, and will retire on December 31, 2019, after more than 34 years of state service. Cloud was appointed director of the CBBS on September 1, 2008 and, having served in the position for over 11 years, will hand the CBBS reins to Dr. Bryon Schroeder, a dedicated and accomplished Center staff member for the last three years.

Following stints with The University of Texas at Austin and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in the 1980s, Cloud worked for the Office of the State Archeologist (OSA) at the Texas Historical Commission for five-and-a-half years in the early 1990s. There his passion for West Texas archaeology, which began through work in Big Bend National Park (BBNP) in the late 1980s, was stoked while employed under state archaeologist Robert J. Mallouf who had strong research interests in this part of the state. While Cloud was at the OSA, he and Mallouf collaborated on two significant projects in the greater Big Bend, the Rough Run burial in BBNP and a testing project at the Polvo site in Redford.

When Mallouf accepted the CBBS directorship in 1995, he asked Cloud to accompany him on the relocation. A new project stood in the wings—a large intensive survey in BBNP. Mallouf, Cloud, and BBNP park archaeologist Thomas C. Alex had authored the project proposal in 1990 and word finally arrived in spring 1995 that the project would be funded over multiple years. This funding allowed Cloud to make the move to Alpine with Mallouf as project archaeologist/field director for the survey.

The BBNP survey kept Cloud busy over the next three years as he directed 17 field sessions that resulted in survey of ca. 16,700 acres and the recording of 391 sites. During this time, he also began teaching occasional classes at Sul Ross as an adjunct professor and directed a program of archaeological compliance work for various entities through contractual arrangements. Initially confined to small projects (e.g., City of Alpine Sewer Line Project), this cultural resource management (CRM) program assumed a much greater role after federal funding for the BBNP project was pulled in 1999. In late 2001, Cloud was named cultural resource management coordinator and began actively pursuing CRM projects, directing or overseeing a number of projects for federal, state, and private entities over the next seven years—including a significant data recovery project at the Arroyo de la Presa site in Presidio County for the Texas Department of Transportation in 2002.

During his tenure as CRM coordinator, Cloud also served as co-director (with Mallouf) of the Center's research program on the 02 Ranch, and was lead investigator at the Double House and Duff Creek sites. In 2006, after being promoted to senior project archaeologist, he directed salvage excavations at the Millington site in Presidio County and served as lead author for the "La Junta de los Ríos" web exhibit on the award-winning Texas Beyond History website (https://texasbeyondhistory.net/junta/index.html).

Reflecting on his time as CBBS director, Cloud stated "In addition to keeping the core CBBS newsletter, journal, conference, and classes moving forward, we were able to expand the Trans-Pecos Archaeological Program and enter into an historic agreement with Mexican archaeologists." In fact, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (INAH)—the federal agency that oversees and investigates all anthropological and historical sites in Mexico—and the CBBS represents the first such agreement entered into by INAH with any entity in the United States. "In many ways," Cloud said, "it feels like a sort of crowning achievement at the end of my career." Upon his retirement, Cloud plans to volunteer with the CBBS while completing unfinished research projects and helping nurture the collaborative agreement with Mexico.

Dr. Schroeder brings a vast amount of experience to the directorship. He earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Wyoming as well as a Ph.D. from the University of Montana where he completed a dissertation on high-altitude prehistoric sites in the Rocky Mountains. He has also worked on a range of research and CRM projects spanning the last 20 years. During his time with the CBBS, Schroeder has focused his efforts on several sites on Pinto Canyon Ranch, notably Spirit Eye Cave where he has uncovered, among other things, the long winding story of prior looting and other excavations that occurred at the site. He has also developed innovative collaborations with outside researchers who are expected to expand the focus into a number of broad research domains. He recently published his first article

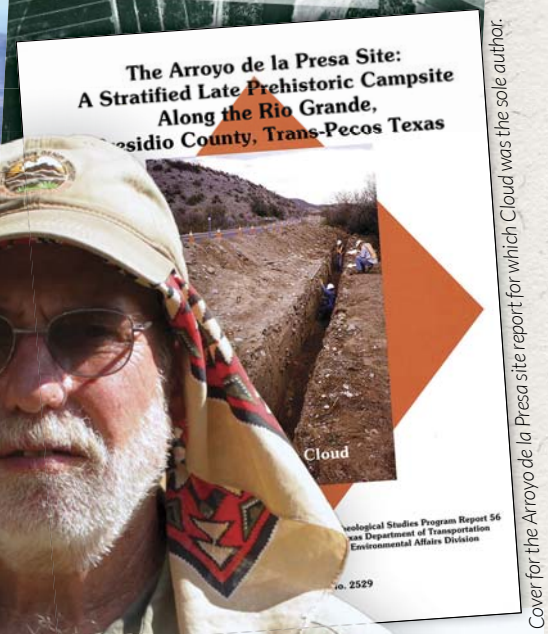
Cloud in foreground inspecting the profile of a Protohistoric pit feature at the Millington site as the CBBS crew works along the trench.

y with CBBS; Schroeder Named New Director

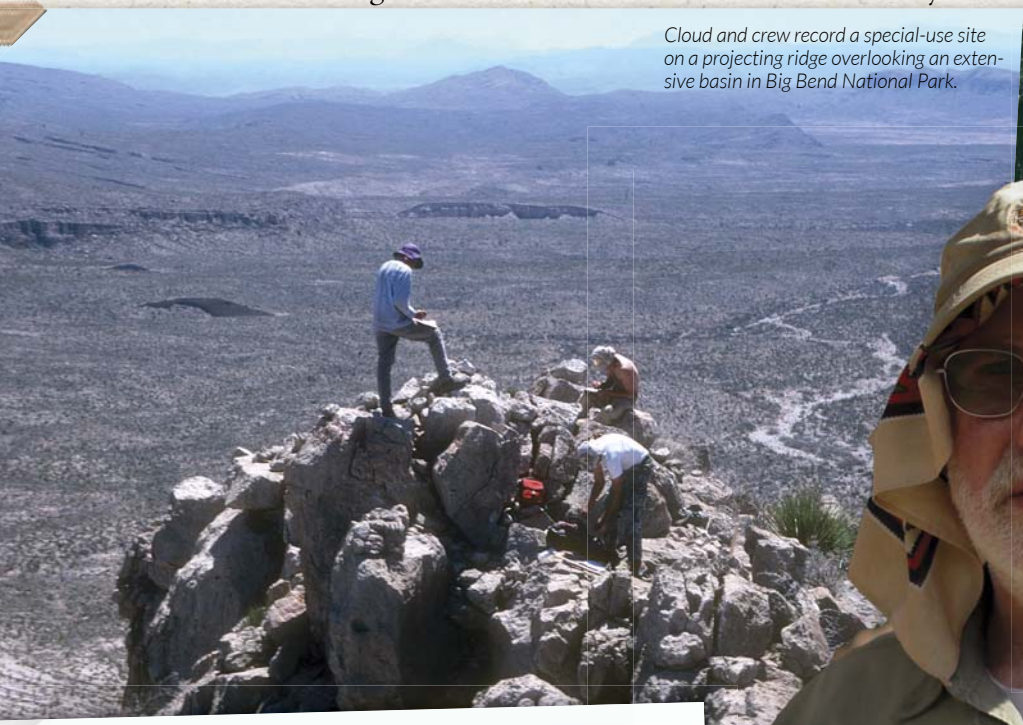
concerning the work at Spirit Eye ("Pebbles in Archaeological Contexts: A Case Study from a West Texas Cave") in a worldwide journal (*Lithic Technology*). Yet another article concerning Late Archaic-aged maize from the site is under preparation. As the incoming director, Schroeder stated "There is an unrivaled research potential for the archaeology of Far West Texas and I look forward to making it my mission to get others interested in this region."

As Cloud recently packed up personal files and books preparing for a new chapter in his life, he added "I have total confidence in Bryon and fully expect he will take the CBBS to new heights through his focus on research in this vast archaeological frontier. His professionalism, friendliness, and collaborative spirit will serve him well in the position and I would not be surprised if his tenure as director lasts the next 20 or 30 years."

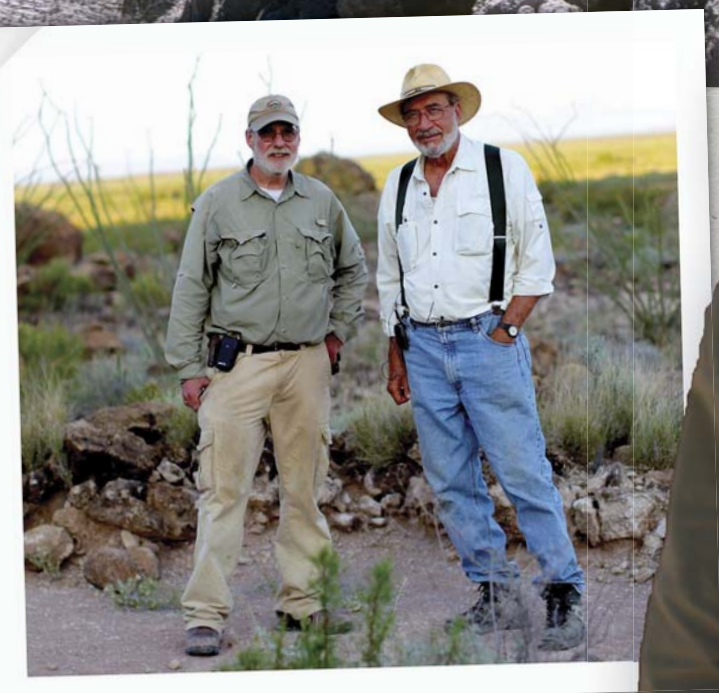
Cover of the Polvo site testing report for which Cloud was the lead author.



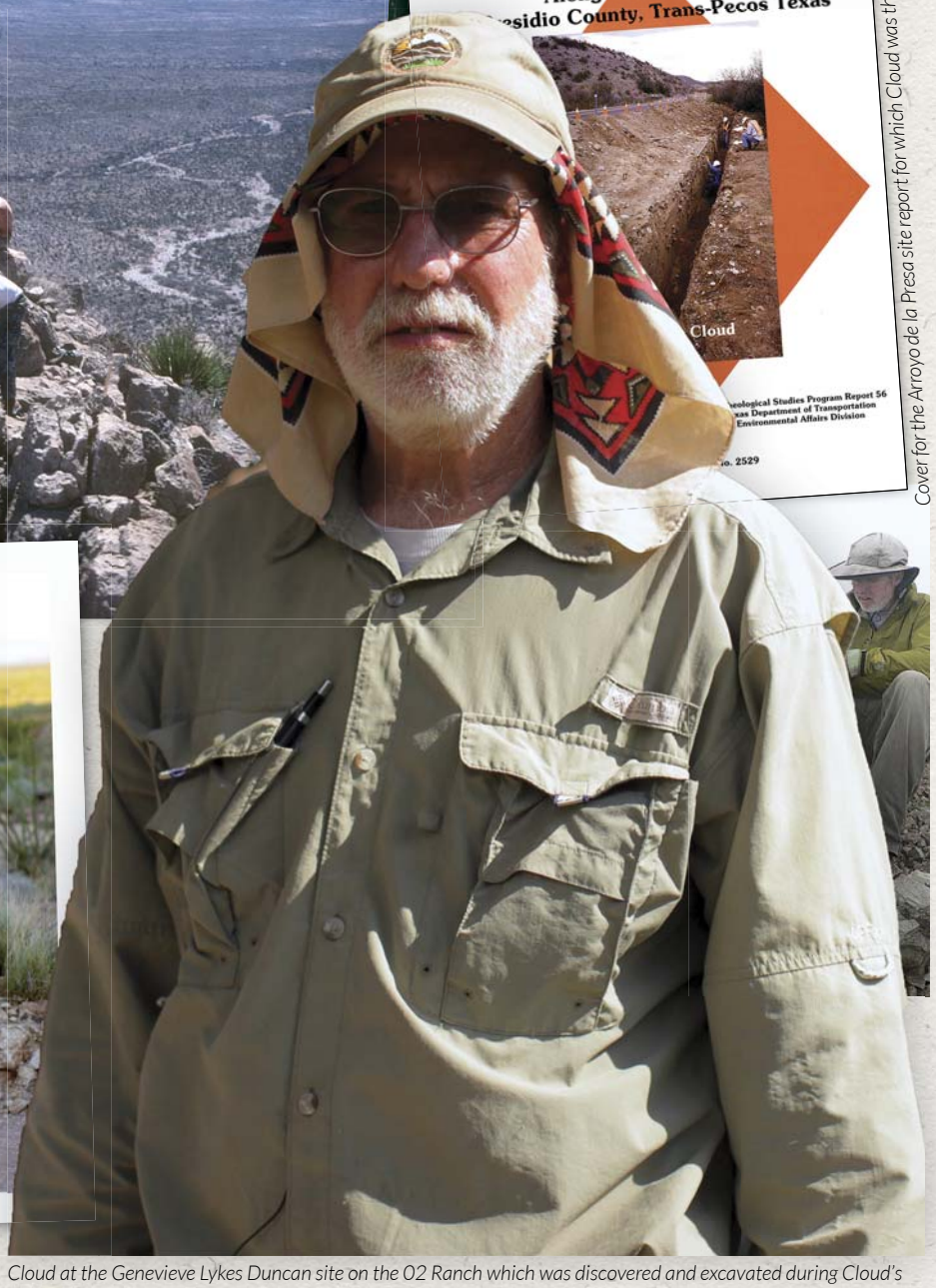
Cover for the Arroyo de la Presa site report for which Cloud was the sole author.



Cloud and crew record a special-use site on a projecting ridge overlooking an extensive basin in Big Bend National Park.



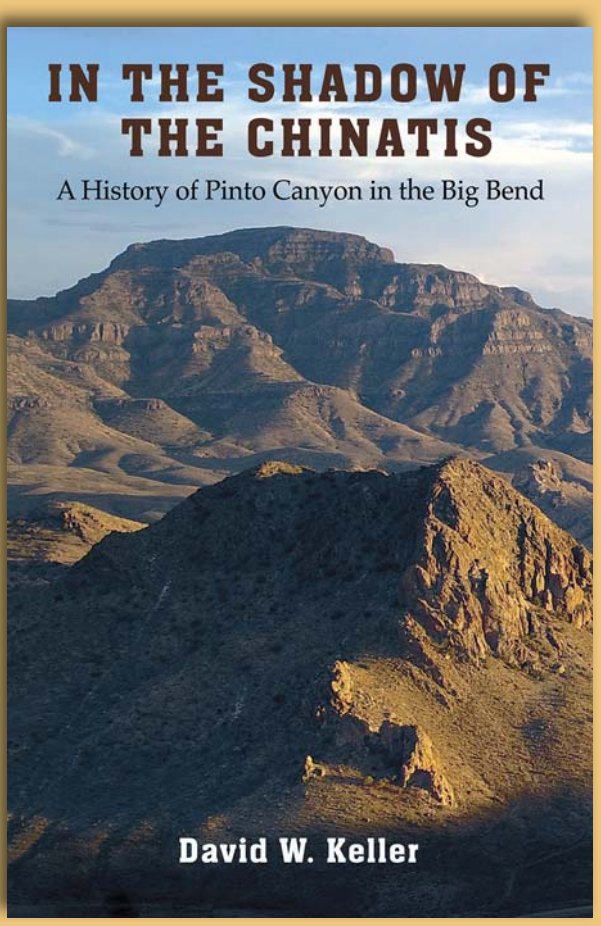
Cloud and previous director Bob Mallouf on the O2 Ranch of Brewster County in 2015. Photo by Bill Millet.



Cloud at the Genevieve Lykes Duncan site on the O2 Ranch which was discovered and excavated during Cloud's tenure as director.

Pinto Canyon Book Finally Released

Nearly a decade in the making, *In the Shadow of the Chinatis: A History of Pinto Canyon in the Big Bend* by CBBS senior project archaeologist David Keller was published in the spring of 2019 by Texas A&M University Press. The book details the natural and cultural history of Pinto Canyon, a remote and rugged area about 30 miles southwest of Marfa where the CBBS has been conducting archaeological research for nearly twenty years. Following changes in state land laws, the canyon was largely settled by 1910 and it is the stories of these settlers that make up the bulk of the book, including Jose Prieto, a central figure in Pinto's history—whose own story was, at turns, both triumphant and tragic. Since its release, Keller has given two public talks—a presentation at Front Street Books in Alpine and again at Marfa's annual Agave Festival. In May, the book was featured on Marfa Public Radio's "Talk at Ten" and, later, on the statewide radio program *Texas Standard*. The book has been favorably reviewed in the *San Antonio Express News* by John MacCormack and in the *Texas Observer* by Sasha von Oldershausen who praised the book's "attention to prose and style." Sales have been brisk. Last word from the press indicated that, out of an initial printing of 1,500 copies, less than 400 remain. Be looking for a paperback edition soon!

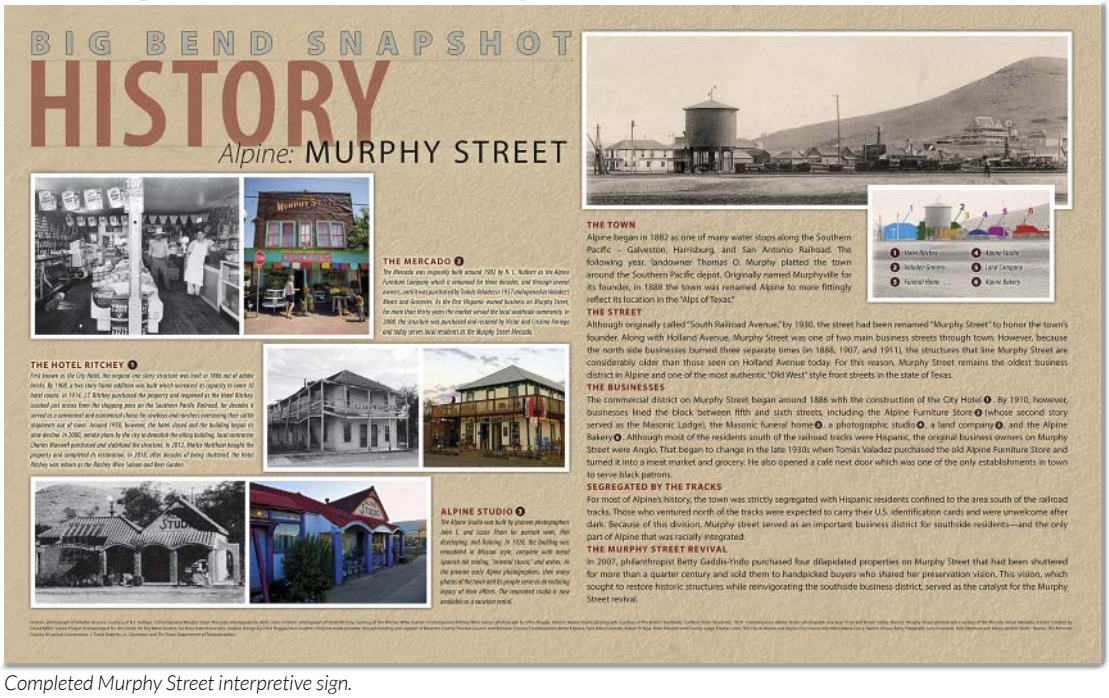


Book Cover of In the Shadow of the Chinatis.

CBBS Champions Local History

The CBBS has been a proud promoter of local history in 2019. On June 1st the CBBS was one of several sponsors of Fiesta 1888—a celebration of historic Murphy Street on Alpine's south side that featured storytellers, interviews, historic exhibits, and a tour of historic homes in addition to music, food, and festivities. As part of the event, CBBS archaeologist David Keller held an open house at his historic adobe home, Casa Valenzuela, built in the 1890s. The event featured the structure's history, archaeology, and restoration along with a book of historic photographs and an exhibit of artifacts collected from inside and around the house. Friends, neighbors, and several Valenzuela descendants attended. In conjunction with Chris Ruggia of Vast Graphics, Keller also crafted the narrative for a new interpretive sign about historic Murphy Street commissioned by the City of Alpine. The sign details the history of several of the street's most significant structures, the historic segregation of the railroad tracks, and the recent "Murphy Street Revival" that has witnessed the restoration of its ailing structures and the shops, restaurants, and bar that make Murphy Street one of Alpine's most celebrated districts.

—David W. Keller



Completed Murphy Street interpretive sign.

CASTOLON STORE FIRE CONDITION ASSESSMENT

On May 22nd, a fire that originated in Mexico jumped the Rio Grande into Big Bend National Park (BBNP) near Castolon. With temperatures nearing 110 degrees F., low humidity, and high wind, the fire spread rapidly to the northwest. Following a dramatic shift in wind direction, gusts blew a shower of embers eastward that fell across the Castolon Historic District, igniting the roof of the latrine and the historic shade ramada of the Castolon Store and Visitor Center. With the shade structure serving as a wick, the fire was drawn directly into the building attic. In spite of the use of thousands of gallons of water, the two buildings suffered extensive damage. By the time the flames were finally quelled, the roofs were completely gone and every wooden component of the structures had been consumed. Having served as the principal investigator for historic preservation efforts in BBNP over the last two years, CBBS archeologist, David Keller was asked to conduct a condition assessment to determine their chance of being restored. On Monday, June 24, Keller spent several hours crawling through the debris to examine the soundness of the structure and in consultation with adobe specialist Pat Taylor of Mesilla, NM, produced a short report that provided guidance on emergency shoring and stabilization and, significantly, determined that the two buildings retained structural integrity and were good candidates for a full restoration.

The Castolon Store following the catastrophic 2019 fire. Photo by David Keller.

—David W. Keller

Thank You!

The CBBS extends sincere thanks to foundations and individuals who have provided support since publication of the 2018 newsletter. These contributions have played significant roles in our many achievements. Listed below are all contributors based on a cumulative total.

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Ellen Sue Turner Memorial Fund

Ellen Sue Turner made many contributions to Texas archaeology, including tireless research of the many projectile point types (dart and arrow points) in the state. She continues to contribute to Texas archaeology through the Ellen Sue Turner Memorial Fund, which supported the salaries of our summer interns—Juan "Kiko" Morlock and John Jorgensen (2014), Juan "Kiko" Morlock (2015), and Lindsey Griffin (2016 and 2017). This fund is yet another way that Ellen Sue's name and legacy can contribute to the study of Texas archaeology.

Please visit our website (http://cbbs.sulross.edu) to learn more about the fund or to donate. Or use the CBBS store on page 15 of this newsletter to make your donation. Call 432-837-8179 for more information.

Select CBBS Analytical Projects—Rock Art Dating and La Junta Ceramics

The CBBS is currently involved in several groundbreaking analytical projects, one focused on dating pictographs in the region and the other on ceramics in use at La Junta during the Protohistoric period. Through generous assistance from the Coypu Foundation of New Orleans, Louisiana (for pictograph dating), and the Texas Preservation Trust Fund (a matching grant administered by the Texas Historical Commission for analyses of Protohistoric La Junta ceramics), as well as supplemental funds from other grants, the CBBS has begun work on these two initiatives.

Dr. Karen Steelman documenting rock art on the O2 Ranch at the Cottonwood Spring Pictograph #1 site prior to taking a tiny sample for radiocarbon dating. Unfortunately, the sample lacked sufficient carbon for dating.

The CBBS was awarded the Coypu grant in November 2018, at which time a relationship with Dr. Karen Steelman of the SHUMLA Archaeological Research and Education Center in the Lower Pecos was established. Trained in dating minute amounts of carbon, which is sometimes added to pictograph paint to enhance binding to the rock surface, Dr. Steelman attempted to date a dark blackish brown paint at the Cottonwood Springs Pictograph Sites #1 and #2 on the 02 Ranch. Although that effort was ultimately unsuccessful due to insufficient carbon in the paint, additional attempts at other sites are currently being planned.

The La Junta Ceramic Project, utilizing a two-pronged analytical approach—petrography and instrumental neutron activation analysis (INAA)—is designed to pin down manufacturing localities of La Junta ceramics during the period A.D. 1550–1800. Both analyses are now complete and CBBS archaeologist Richard Walter is in the process of finalizing an associated report. The analyses identified clusters of manufacturing locales suggesting most ceramics found at individual sites were actually made at those sites rather than being imported. Stay tuned for more exciting discoveries from these two paths of inquiry.

Painted late-period sherds (ca. A.D. 1550–1800) from the Millington site recently submitted for petrography and instrumental neutron activation analysis.

—William A. Cloud

New Collaboration with Ágreda, Spain and Texas House Resolution 2103

On April 12, 2019, the CBBS entered into a cooperative agreement with Ágreda, Spain, a village about the size of Alpine in the state of Soria. Last spring, CBBS director William A. (Andy) Cloud traveled to Spain to meet with Ágreda mayor Jesús Manuel Alonso Jiménez, and the two signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) designed to promote cooperation on projects of mutual interest.

Ágreda is the village where a cloistered Conceptionist nun, María de Jesús, lived—a woman many believe "bilocated" (being in two places at once) from Spain to West Texas and eastern New Mexico over 500 times between 1620–1631 while ministering to New World/*Nuevo Espana* natives. Because the Conceptionist's order is known for their white habits and blue cloaks, she became known as the "Lady in Blue."

While this story is an important part of history in Ágreda and across Spain, it also has a West Texas component. In 1629, Jumano Indians traveled to Isleta, just south of present-day Albuquerque, New Mexico, seeking Christian missionaries. They indicated a women dressed in blue had been teaching them the religion, in their own tongue, and had told them to ask for further instruction from the Franciscan priests. When shown a painting of an older nun from the Conceptionist's order, they said that was how the woman was dressed, but that she was young.

CBBS director Cloud (center) with other supporters (Jorge Nunez, Bill Millet, CBBS Advisory Council member Miguel Ángel Mazarambroz, and Dan Arellano) on the dais in the House Chamber on May 25, 2019 during passage of H.R. 2103, which acknowledged and recognized the CBBS for its memorandum of understandings with Mexico's INAH and Ágreda, Spain.

CBBS director Cloud, Ágreda mayor Jesús Manuel Alonso, and Spanish Ambassador Miguel Ángel Mazarambroz (CBBS Advisory Council member) on April 13, 2019 in Ágreda, Spain, at the signing of a memorandum of understanding designed to promote cooperation on projects of mutual interest.

Soon after this incident, Fray Alonso de Benavides, custodian of the Franciscans in *Nuevo Mexico* from 1626–1629, returned to Spain and included this story in his report to Spanish authorities. He later interviewed María de Ágreda, as she became known, and she provided him details of her experiences in the New World, including information about a one-eyed Jumano leader, Captain Tuerto, whom Benavides knew.

While the MOU established between the village of Ágreda and the CBBS recognizes the shared history of the Lady in Blue, it also promotes further investigation of associated archives housed in Spain and Mexico that have yet to be uncovered. The agreement promotes good will and the importance of the relationship between Spain and Texas.

Notably, the CBBS was recently acknowledged for this MOU and the 2017 MOU with the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* of Mexico through Texas House Resolution 2103, passed on May 24, 2019.

—William A. Cloud

AN AMBIGUOUS ARTIFACT FROM SAN ESTEBAN

San Esteban rockshelter is located in Presidio County south of Marfa, and is currently being excavated by Sul Ross State University in partnership with the University of Kansas. While participating in excavations at the site in the summer of 2019, I was told that an atlatl from this site was curated at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory in Austin. Traditional weapons are a research interest of mine, so I was, of course, excited. A colleague travelled to the collection and supplied me photographs of this artifact. The photographs appeared to show a rod-bodied atlatl with a spur bound on with sinew. When I scaled the photographs, it became apparent that if this was an atlatl, it was a small one. Overall length was about 43 cm, which is on the short side, but the diameter was 8mm, or the size of an arrow shaft. The spur was unusually sharp and steeply angled, and the "handle" was a tapered cone about 5 cm in length with grooves cut into its surface. This makes little sense for a handle, but is precisely the way to prepare a foreshaft to mate to a dart or arrow mainshaft. The grooves increase friction, making for a solid connection. Based on these photos, it is my opinion that this artifact is the tip of a fishing arrow, the pointy "spur" being a barb to hook the flesh of the target. To be certain, closer examination will be necessary, but it looks likely that this tool is part of a projectile weapon system, but whether it was the launcher or projectile remains in question.

—Justin Garnett
Graduate Student
Department of Anthropology
University of Kansas
www.basketmakeratlatl.com

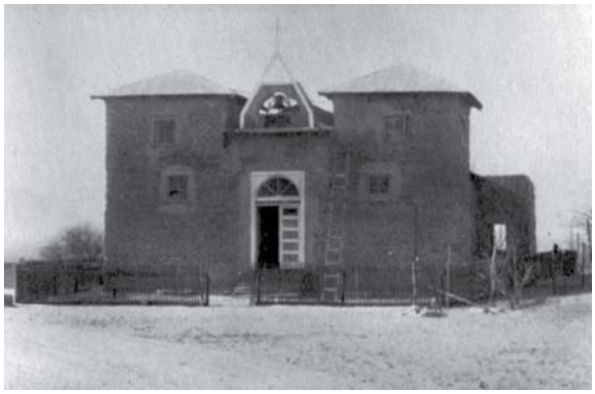
San Esteban artifact (measurements are approximate and taken from a photograph).

Restoration Project on Ruidosa Church Finally on Track

El Corazon Sagrado de la Iglesia de Jesus (the Sacred Heart of the church of Jesus) was constructed around 1914 by the citizens of Ruidosa under the guidance of Dutch-born Father Nicholas Brocardus Eekin using traditional sun dried adobe bricks. The completed structure featured two pyramidal-roofed towers flanking a central arched vestibule entryway. The four interior adobe arches (the vestibule, nave, and flanking towers) are believed to be the largest traditional adobe arches in the state. Used for decades by its congregation for weddings, funerals, and Sunday Mass, as the population gradually declined, the church began to fall into disrepair. By the early 1990s, the church had reached an advanced state of decay and the El Paso Diocese announced plans to demolish it. Although those plans were halted in response to local opposition, and both Donald Judd and the Chinati Foundation discussed its restoration, the church continued to deteriorate.

In 2004, funding was secured through the Texas Historical Commission in conjunction with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Presidio County Historical Commission. Over the course of the following six years the building was stabilized and partially restored. Positive drainage was established, eroded adobes were replaced, a corrugated metal roof was added, exterior walls were earth plastered, the arches were restored, and the left tower was partially rebuilt. However, due to the exhaustion of funds, the project was abandoned in 2010 and deterioration began anew. After years of negotiation, in August of 2019, the

(Continued on page 14)



The Ruidosa Church around 1914.

The Ruidosa Church in 2013. Photo by David Keller.

La Vista de la Frontera is the annual newsletter of the Center for Big Bend Studies of Sul Ross State University. Address correspondence to the Editor, Center for Big Bend Studies, Box C-71, Alpine, TX 79832, or cbbs@sulross.edu.

Editing by William A. Cloud, David W. Keller, and Bryon Schroeder
Graphic design by Letitia Wetterauer

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.

Volume 29, 2019
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CBBS AWARDED $150,000 TO CONDUCT HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK

The Big Bend Conservancy recently provided matching funds to the National Park Service's Centennial Challenge Fund for a total of $150,000 awarded to the CBBS for historic preservation work in Big Bend National Park (BBNP). Under a cooperative agreement with the park, in recent years the CBBS has been working with local preservation contractors and NPS staff to safeguard the future of a number of historic structures in the park. The present award is earmarked for work on two of the most significant structures in the Castolon area: the Dorgan House and the Alvino House. One of the most iconic structures in the park, the Dorgan house has suffered severe deterioration over the years, and is presently little more than a façade that hangs in the balance. Plans call for a full stabilization of the existing ruin and a new coat of mud plaster that will serve as a sacrificial coat to protect the underlying adobe bricks. Although in much better condition, a range of maintenance issues faces the Alvino house—believed to be the oldest standing adobe structure in the park. Work here will consist of new parapet caps, roof repairs, termite treatment, and exterior mud plaster. Taken together, the effort will be the CBBS's most significant historic preservation project yet.

The Dorgan House in Big Bend National Park showing recent wall collapse. Photo by David Keller.

(Boulder Glyphs: continued from page 2)

Through the use of such tools, in conjunction with additional research and hypothesis testing, we hope to ultimately unravel this knotted and complex history of the boulder petroglyphs.

—Erika Blecha

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(Ruidosa Restoration Project: continued from page 13)

Catholic Diocese deeded the property to Presidio County to allow its full restoration. The CBBS is assisting in forming the nonprofit, Friends of the Ruidosa Church, which will raise funds to complete the restoration of this endangered relic of our historic past.

—David W. Keller

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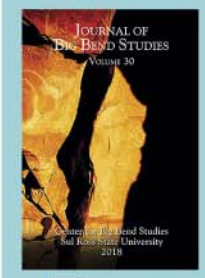
Journal 30 Now Available

Our most recent journals are shown here. View abstracts and journals on our website at: cbbs.sulross.edu.

$15 each (plus $3 shipping forthe first book and 50¢ for each additional book)



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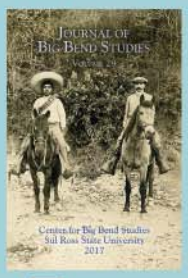

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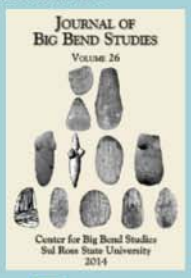

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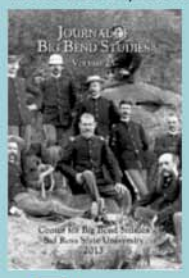

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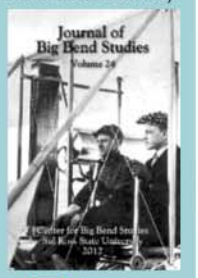

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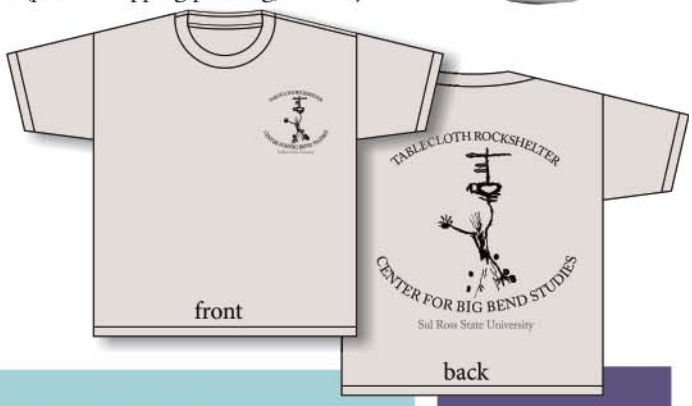

Featuring rock art from the Big Bend's Tablecloth Rockshelter, the CBBS t-shirts were designed by our former graphic illustrator, Avram Dumitrescu, and are produced in Alpine, Texas. Available in green or khaki, adult sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL and youth sizes S, M, and L.

T-shirt #1 Size _____ Color: ☐ khaki ☐ green

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