

TIME CAPSULE

Newsletter of the **FORT BEND ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

An affiliate of the Fort Bend History Association

600 Houston Street / Richmond, TX 77469, 281-342-6478 ext. 1301

August 2023, Volume 31, Number 8



General Meeting, August 15, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

The Nighthawk Bison Jump

Speaker: Dr. August “Gus” Costa

Dr. August “Gus” Costa is an independent consulting archaeologist who provides specialist support in geoarchaeology, artifact and faunal analysis. Gus earned a doctorate degree focusing on paleoanthropology at Indiana University. He was a Fulbright and Leakey Foundation fellow who conducted expeditions to India supported by the National Science Foundation. His academic work in India focused on the earliest human occupation of South Asia. Gus led a field program in Gujarat which identified the most productive Ice Age fossil locality in western India and discovered a new species of extinct antelope, as well as numerous prehistoric cultural remains. Gus has more than 20 years’ experience in archeology and has carried out field and lab-based work in Asia, Africa and Europe, as well as numerous projects within the U.S.



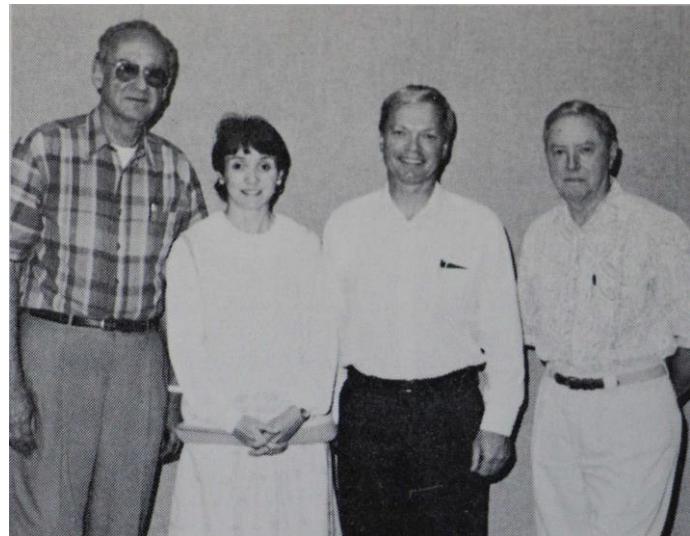
Gus is an adjunct lecturer at Rice University where he has taught courses in geoarchaeology, paleontology, paleotechnology and Asian Prehistory. Gus has contributed to numerous cultural resource surveys and acted as a consulting geoarchaeologist and analyst for survey, testing and large data recovery projects. In the last five years, Gus served in various staff and management roles including Principal Investigator and Vice President at Moore Archaeological Consulting, Inc. in Houston, Texas. In 2020, Gus shifted to independent consulting, primarily in Geoarchaeology, working for a variety of Cultural Resource Management firms in Texas and across the south.

Meeting location: Fort Bend Museum, 410 S. Fifth Street in Richmond, TX. The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome - the program is free and open to the public.

FBAS is 30 Years Old!

Celebrating 30 Years of Archeology in Fort Bend County

Thirty years ago, The Herald Coaster newspaper announced in an article that Fort Bend County officially has its own archeological society. Following a year of planning and preparation, the Fort Bend Archeological Society (FBAS) held its first meeting on April 20, 1993. The first Fort Bend Archeological Society's officers included: president, Bob Crosser; vice-president, D.J. Thibault; treasurer, Charles Scholer; and secretary, Susan Severance. Michael Moore, Linda Gorski, Walter McMeans and Michael Wood were selected as directors-at-large. Prior to the formation of FBAS, the Fort Bend County Museum (now the Fort Bend History Association) sponsored an archeology awareness program featuring noted speakers and on-site excavations. There was so much enthusiasm from the awareness program, that FBAS was an out-growth of the series.



The first FBAS officers included, left to right, Charles Scholer, Susan Severance, vice president D.J. Thibault, and Bob Crosser.

The archeology awareness program had begun a year prior to the first charter meeting with a series of monthly classes on archeology. The main goal was to establish an archeological society for the county. At that time, the Fort Bend County Museum acknowledged there were hundreds of archeological sites, including both prehistoric and historical sites, which needed to be investigated. The monthly classes began with an overview of historical archeology. The topics included a variety of subjects such as archeological site locations, landowner's rights and legal issues and archeology lab work. Leading archeologists from the Houston area led the series of classes and discussions. Such notable archeologists included Ken Brown of the University of Houston, Roger Moore of Moore Archeological Consulting, Joan Few of the University of Houston at Clear Lake, Pam Wheat, past president of the Houston Archeological Society, and Mark Denton of the Texas Antiquities Commission.

The newly formed organization's first project was to identify the potentially significant archeological sites within the county. Since its inception, FBAS volunteers have contributed thousands of hours of their own time researching, investigating, exploring and documenting the history of the county. Dozens of sites have been excavated. The sites represent inhabitants who lived in Fort Bend County from as far back as 3,300 years ago to those living here up through the early 20th century. FBAS members have investigated the site of the old jail in Richmond, explored plantation home sites, searched for evidence of homes that once stood around the site of the "fort" of Fort Bend, searched for the lost grave of Deaf Smith and investigated the last home site of the second President of Texas. The society discovered artifacts from the "Old Prairie Home" which burned down at the George Ranch in 1888. FBAS works with the County Historical Commission to investigate new sites and saved the Bland Cemetery which a previous landowner tried to make disappear.

As an affiliate of the Fort Bend History Association, FBAS has worked at their sites, including the Fort Bend Museum, Decker Park, and the George Ranch Historical Park. FBAS worked at the sites during special events, such as Children's Day and Texian Market Days. During the events, the society conducted real archeological digs for children to teach them the basics of fieldwork, like digging and screening. FBAS members have also worked

alongside the Houston Archeological Society (HAS) over the years, in the counties of Fort Bend, Austin, and Harris. Fort Bend members were among the first to conduct archeological research in the old town site of San Felipe, Texas. A few years ago, FBAS members helped HAS screen through soil excavated by TXDOT from Dimond Knoll – a robust Late Archaic occupation site in west Harris County.

Today, the society continues to investigate archeological sites in the county. Presently, FBAS is working on a site close to downtown Richmond. It's a great opportunity for new volunteers to join and to be part of the society's mission to investigate and preserve archeological sites. There are many opportunities to be a part of the ongoing research. You can research county records, get dirty digging in the field, conduct lab work or learn how to operate high tech sensing equipment, such as a ground conductivity meter or ground penetrating radar.



Smithers Lake Site, 1995



Old Prairie Home Site, George Ranch, 2002



Barnett Plantation Site, 2006



Decker Park Site, 2016

FBAS Field Notes

Excavation Site – The site we are working on now is a historic homesite near downtown Richmond. Currently, four pits are open and have been excavated to a depth of 36". In the photo below left, you can see a line down the middle of the pits, formed between the light and dark colored soils.



To prepare for the photo above, the floors of each of the four pits were cleaned of any loose soil and debris, such as leaves. Towards the top of the above photo, you can see the corner of the root cellar. Look for a square corner in the light colored soil. The lighter soil is where the interior of the cellar once was. Above right, Merrick Moriel cleans the floor of Pit L63. On the bottom right, John Rich cleans up the floor of Pit L64. Scraping the top of the soil helps keep the floor level and the line sharp. Soil removed from the pits is always run through the screens on the chance there may be artifacts.



Member Spotlight

Ken Gergely – A few years ago, Ken Gergely contacted FBAS asking if he could join in on the Saturday morning excavations. Looking to start a new career, Ken was interested in the field of archeology. After spending a few weekends with FBAS, he found a job in cultural resource management and started working professionally in archeology. At the same time, he began working on a degree in the field. This summer, on July 25, FBAS member Ken Gergely successfully defended his thesis before a thesis committee to earn his Masters of Professional Studies in Cultural and Heritage Resource Management (CHRM). Ken's thesis was titled "A Synthesis of Projectile Point Characteristics and Distribution Across the Lower Landscape in the Lower Tombigbee River Basin, Alabama."



Cultural resource management is the vocation and practice of managing heritage assets, and other cultural resources. Cultural heritage includes artifacts, monuments, groups of buildings and sites. It also includes museums that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historic, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific and social significance. Management of cultural resources in the heritage context is mainly concerned with the investigation of sites with archeological potential, the preservation and interpretation of historic sites and artifacts, and the culture of indigenous people. A significant proportion of the archeological investigation is conducted on sites under threat of development. Such investigations are done by private companies on a consulting basis.

What is that?



Cufflink from current archeological site (left), similar vintage cufflinks on eBay (right).

Recently, an interesting artifact, seen in the above left image, was found in one of the excavation pits. At first glance it looked like a button inset with mother of pearl. The letters M and A could be seen on the back. We had never seen a button shaped like this before. After a quick search on the internet, it turned out it wasn't a button at all. In fact, what was found was actually half of a cufflink. Originally, two halves would have snapped together to form a cufflink. In 1918, the company Baer & Wilde introduced the KUM-A-PART Cuff Buttons. They were very popular throughout the 1920s. It's a very cool find, but we were hoping to find more artifacts from the mid-1800s. We never know what we'll find next!

Meeting Minutes

May 16, 2023

The Fort Bend Archeological Society met at the Fort Bend Museum, Richmond, Texas. In attendance were 14 members and 2 guests. President Paul Spana, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The balance as of May 7, 2023 is \$6,209.85. Rich Murphy moved to accept the treasurer's report and David Rose seconded the motion. All members voted to accept the treasurer's report. There were no minutes from the online April meeting to approve.

Old Business:

- Excavation work continues at the Lamar site. FBAS members continue to investigate a possible root cellar at the Lamar home site.

New Business:

- The fourth corner of the root cellar has been found. Members are now investigating the east wall of the root cellar. The previous pits which have remained open will now be filled in.

Announcements:

- There will be no meeting in June. The July 18th meeting will be held online.
- The August 15th meeting will be held in person.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. Minutes submitted by Paul Spana

Treasurer's Report

Balance as of May 7, 2023	\$6,209.85
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1990 5/23/2023 Friends of San Felipe de Austin SHS - honorarium	- 100.00
1991 5/23/2023 Paul Spana reimbursement for Facebook ad	- 14.00

Balance as of June 1, 2023	\$6,095.85
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No financial activity in June

Balance as of July 12, 2023	\$6,095.85
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1992 8/8/2023 Dr. August Costa speaker honorarium	- 100.00
1993 8/8/2023 Claire Rogers reimbursement for postage March – July	- 33.00

Balance as of August 8, 2023	\$5,962.85
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Submitted by
Claire Rogers, Treasurer