

TEXAS  
HERITAGE

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The Archeology Issue

Representing the Spanish Colonial Period · "Texas Beyond History" a new website



# Texas Beyond History

TBH ?

Archeology?

Site Exhibits

Special Exhibits

KIDS Only ?

Teachers

FAQ

Glossary

The cultural heritage of Texas as revealed by archeology.

created by:

Texas Archeological Research Laboratory  
and Texas Archeological Society

Firecracker Pueblo  
• Ceremonial Cave

Alibates

Red River War

Nasoni

Lubbock Lake

Harrell

Gilbert

Mission San Saba

Graham-Applegate

Camp Ford

Honey Creek

Gault

Caddoan Mounds

Haas

Rubin Hancock

Guy Town

Bonfire Shelter

Fort St. Louis

Lower Pecos

The Belle

Falcon

Brownsville-Barril



## CAMP FORD

ON THIS SITE DURING THE CIVIL WAR WAS LOCATED CAMP FORD, THE LARGEST PRISONER-OF-WAR COMPOUND FOR UNION TROOPS WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER. NAMED IN HONOR OF COL. JOHN SHRIFF FORD WHO ORIGINALLY ESTABLISHED A TRAINING CAMP HERE IN 1862, IT WAS CONVERTED IN THE SUMMER OF 1863 TO A PRISON CAMP.

IT FIRST CONSISTED OF FOUR TO FIVE ACRES ENCLOSED BY A STOCKADE SIXTEEN FEET HIGH. IN THE SPRING OF 1864, FOLLOWING THE CONFEDERATE VICTORIES AT MANSFIELD, LOUISIANA AND MARK'S MILLS, ARKANSAS, THE ENCLOSURE WAS DOUBLED TO ACCOMMODATE THE LARGE INFLUX OF PRISONERS. APPROXIMATELY 4700 FEDERAL WERE CONFINED HERE DURING THIS PERIOD. THIS OVERCROWDED CONDITION WAS SOMEWHAT RELIEVED THROUGH A SERIES OF PRISONER-OF-WAR EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH.

UNION SOLDIERS REPRESENTING NEARLY ONE HUNDRED DIFFERENT REGIMENTS PLUS SAILORS FROM GUNBOATS AND TRANSPORTS WERE CONFINED HERE. IN ADDITION THERE WERE IMPRISONED UNION SYMPATHIZERS, SPIES AND EVEN CONFEDERATE DESERTERS.

THE PRISONERS CONSTRUCTED THEIR OWN SHELTERS RANGING FROM LOG HUTS AND BURROWS CALLED "SHEDDINGS" TO BRUSH ARBORS AND TENTS MADE OF BLANKETS.

A SPRING, LOCATED ABOUT 100 YARDS SOUTHWEST OF THIS MARKER, FURNISHED AN AMPLE SUPPLY OF GOOD WATER. THEIR MEAGER RATIONS, ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS THAT OF THEIR GUARDS, USUALLY CONSISTED OF BEEF AND CORN MEAL AND WERE SOMETIMES SUPPLEMENTED BY VEGETABLES PURCHASED FROM NEARBY FARMS.

ALTHOUGH ESCAPE ATTEMPTS WERE FREQUENT, VERY FEW WERE SUCCESSFUL DUE TO THE LONG DISTANCE TO UNION LINES AND THE DIFFICULTY IN ELUDING THE TRACKING HOUNDS USED BY THE CONFEDERATE GUARDS.

EVEN THOUGH CONDITIONS WERE PRIMITIVE IT COMPARED FAVORABLY WITH THE OTHER CIVIL WAR PRISON CAMPS. CAMP FORD CONTINUED TO SERVE AS A PRISON UNTIL THE SURRENDER OF THE TRANS-MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT IN MAY 1865. IT WAS LATER DESTROYED BY FEDERAL OCCUPATION TROOPS.

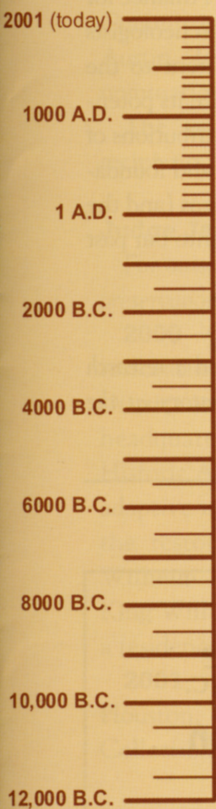




# Bringing Texas Archeology to the World

By Steve Black

## Timeline



Since the early 1900s archeologists have been unearthing evidence of the human history of Texas—a rich and varied cultural heritage that stretches back at least 13,500 years. The last three decades have seen a tremendous surge in archeological investigation as a direct consequence of federal and state cultural resource laws. Yet, most of what has been learned is buried in obscure technical reports and unseen in dusty boxes and seldom-visited shelves in curatorial facilities across the state. Most Texas museums offer only a tiny glimpse of the Texas past that archeology has revealed.

### The Need

In response, the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) at the University of Texas at Austin and the Texas Archeological Society (TAS) have joined forces to create a new website, *Texas Beyond History*—[www.texas-beyondhistory.net](http://www.texas-beyondhistory.net). The goal of the site is to share with the public the meaningful results of archeological research in Texas. The new website combines TARL's vision of creating a virtual museum and the desire of TAS for an online magazine on Texas archeology. From the opening page, web readers can choose from among dozens of archeological sites across the state listed on a colorful map of Texas. Pass the cursor over a site name and a one-paragraph description will pop up as well as a timeline showing the period(s) the site was occupied. Click on any site name and enter a "site exhibit," the Internet equivalent of a museum exhibit.

### A Virtual Museum Exhibit

Each site exhibit summarizes the significant facts and colorful details of human history at each locale. The text is illustrated by photographs, maps, drawings, and paintings, most presented as thumbnail images linked to full-screen versions that can be examined for detail. Some site exhibits are very extensive, particularly those on the state's most significant archeological sites for which TARL has important collections.

For instance, the largest exhibit to date is on Bonfire Shelter, the oldest and southernmost buffalo jump site in North America. The reader can explore dozens of pages telling stories such as the "plunge of death"—how buffalo herds sometimes numbering in the hundreds were stampeded like huge lemmings off the cliff, providing a mountain of food for the hunters who orchestrated the event. Other pages tell the archeologists' stories—treasured moments like the discovery of a hidden cache of painted pebbles and the behind-the-scenes struggle to find smoking-gun evidence that humans had a hand in creating the deepest bone beds at Bonfire. Or the viewer can take a virtual tour of the box canyon near Langtry that is home to Bonfire Shelter and other occupied rock shelters. Throughout the website, artifact galleries showcase the material evidence on which interpretations are based.

There are also exhibits on historic-era archeological sites such as the *Belle*, the now-famous 1686 shipwreck of the La Salle expedition excavated in an extraordinary fashion in the middle of Matagorda Bay by the Texas Historical Commission. For Camp Ford (*see images opposite*), the once-overcrowded Confederate Prison Camp

Top: Website graphic showing Texas archeological sites; below right: hand-colored illustration from *Harper's Magazine*, courtesy of Alston Thomas; below left: Camp Ford marker. Images provided by the Texas Archeological Research Lab, Austin.





near Tyler, a detailed timeline correlates Civil War events nationwide, in Texas, and in the local area of Northeast Texas. While these places are very much part of the historic record, archeological investigations have turned up a great deal that truly does lie beyond written history. Another good example is the Gilbert site 50 miles east of Dallas. There in the mid-1700s a Caddo-related Indian group, possibly the Kichai, established a deer hunting and hide-processing camp that sent thousands of deer hides to France to be made into sleek garments worn by fashionable Parisians. In exchange, French traders or their Indian partners brought horses loaded with trade goods—guns, hatchets, beads, swords, kettles, and much more. Archeological investigations at the Gilbert site have turned up hundreds of hide-scrapers and butchered deer bones—the tools and refuse documenting an heretofore unknown hub of commercial enterprise, an 18th-century “French connection” in East Texas.

But stories and photographs will go only so far; vivid interpretive drawings and paintings will help recreate forgotten moments in time—action scenes based on archeological and historical evidence. *Texas Beyond History* spotlights many of the carefully researched interpretive paintings by many artists, including those that Nola Davis has produced for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). New drawings by TBH staff artist, Charles Shaw, illustrate some of the new stories that are being told for the first time to a general audience on the new website. The website will also have a great many photographs, including images from existing archives, personal photographs, and many new images taken just for this project.

**The time is ripe to share with the people of Texas (and the world) some of the amazing discoveries and insights into our past that have been uncovered through archeology.**

The creation of such a complex and content-rich website is a major undertaking. TARL and TAS have pooled resources to create *Texas Beyond History*. Startup funding has been provided by the Houston Endowment, the Lende Foundation, the Texas State Historical Association, the Texas Historical Foundation, the College of Liberal Arts at UT Austin, and the Texas Alliance for Public Archeology. Professional and avocational archeologists from across the state have already contributed content to the website. But in order for *Texas Beyond History* to realize its potential, the effort will require the collaboration and contributions of many archeologists, organizations, sponsors, donors, and foundations. The time is ripe to share with the people of Texas (and the world) some of the amazing discoveries and insights into our past that have been uncovered through archeology.

*Dr. Steve Black is editor of Texas Beyond History and a research associate at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at the University of Texas at Austin.*

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Best wishes to Texas HERITAGE, the Texas Historical Foundation, and the members of the Texas Archeological Society from all the staff at Moore Archeological Consulting, Inc.

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# Archeology - For Kids Only

School children and teachers have special sections on the Texas Beyond History website that help them learn and teach about our state's ancestors and cultural resources.



The brightly colored "Kids Only" area features fun, interactive learning devices such as "how many ways can you use a bison?" Clicking on any part of the pictured bison brings up a list that explains how different parts of the body were used. A click on the tail produces virtual animal excrement (the kids will love it!)...as well as the fact that dried buffalo chips were important sources of fuel for Native Americans and early settlers.

Dr. Dirt (above), a veteran archeologist personified by a bespectacled

Can you discover the secret passage to the kids' pages?

Home | Glossary



Images courtesy of the Texas Archeological Research Lab, Austin.

armadillo wearing a tattered cowboy hat, will answer questions about archeology in ways that children can understand.

The teacher's section has downloadable activities and lesson plans designed by professional educators to reflect elements of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. As the website grows, there will be special exhibit guides for busy teachers allowing them to bone up on what archeologists are adding to the state's historical record.

The teacher's site integrates archeology into the art, math/science, social studies, and language art curriculums. Clicking on one of these subject areas takes the user to specific lesson plans that include subjects ranging from personal chronology, to mapping an arche-

ological site, to explaining the implements and tools that ancient peoples used.

Games, puzzles, and pictures are also employed throughout the kid's section so that they can learn about their past and have fun doing it.

On a related note, teachers should watch for activities and programs promoting archeology and the preservation of cultural resources that will take place during October, Archeology Awareness Month in Texas. Across the state, communities and organizations will sponsor archeology fairs and programs, and some of the activities will be especially geared toward children. For information, call the Texas Historical Commission Archeology Division at (512) 463-9505.