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# Conservation Efforts Reveal New Details About a 19th Century Thimble Recovered at Frost Town

*Charlie Gordy and Douglas K. Boyd*

*Fig. 1. Thimble found in 1869 Feature 1100 at Frost Town in April 2018, before conservation. Photo by Douglas K. Boyd.*

## Introduction

This article describes post conservation details about a brass thimble recovered at the historic Frost Town Site (41HR982) near downtown Houston in April 2018, during an archeological data recovery investigation sponsored by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). This specimen was found in a pit containing numerous early nineteenth-century historic items that were deposited prior to the Civil War. When it was originally found, the surface of the artifact was too corroded/concreted to see any of the important details (Figure 1). Houston Archeological Society (HAS) member and Texas Historical Commission archeological steward, Charlie Gordy, completed conservation of the specimen between October and November 2021. This effort removed the corrosion/concretion deposits and revealed the intricate decorative details. The author then conducted archival research that enabled him to identify the manufacturing technique and probable age of this specimen, as well as to infer the probable country of origin.

## Discovery and Archeological Context

Archeologists from Prewitt and Associates, Inc. (now Stantec) conducted the archeological data recovery at Frost Town during two field seasons in 2016 and 2018. These investigations were performed under contract with the Archeology Studies Program, Environmental Affairs Division, TxDOT in conjunction with the Elysain Viaduct Bridge Replacement Project. The

*Continues next page*

thimble was assigned to Lot 1206, Specimen 8 within the Frost Town artifact inventory, and was found inside a pit feature designated Feature 1100.

Identified in the northwest corner of Block D during mechanical scraping, Feature 1100 is an oval pit measuring 131 centimeters (cm) east-west by 52 cm north-south (Figure 2). The top of the pit was first observed at an elevation of 12.04 meters (m), and its bottom after excavation was at 11.77m. Thus, the Feature 1100 pit was only 27 cm deep.

The pit had been dug into clay substrate, but the fill inside the pit consisted of sandy loam sediment and densely packed historical artifacts. No apparent stratification was observed in the pit fill, and relatively little sediment was mixed in with the artifacts. Consequently, the pit appears to have been filled rapidly in a single episode (Figure 3).

In 2020 and 2021, members of the HAS were assisting TxDOT and Stantec by reconstructing the many broken ceramic and glass artifacts from Feature 1100 and conducting research to identify these artifacts. This work is still under-

*Fig. 2. Map of the location of Feature 1100 in Frost Town. Map is a section from* W. E. Wood's Map of Houston, Harris County.

*Fig. 3. Photo of Frost Town excavation of Feature 1100 with Archeologist Emory Worrell excavating the feature. Partially demolished Elisyan Viaduct Bridge is shown in the background. Photograph by Douglas K. Boyd.*

way, but it appears that all the historical items found in this pit were manufactured and in common use from the 1820s to the1850s or 60s. Although this interpretation is preliminary at this point, the filling of this pit appears to have occurred prior to the Civil War, and perhaps in the 1850s.

## Pre-Conservation Inspection

Gordy received the artifact October 26, 2021, in washed, rough condition with concretion concealing large areas of diagnostic details. It appears to be in solid condition with no dents or shape distortions (Figure 4). The rolled rim appears to exhibit some feathering deterioration at some points where it curls to the border. The construction material is most likely copper alloy (brass), as it is not of noble metal nor attracted to a magnet. The vast majority of thimbles found in a late historical context are made of this type of material. The physical data

*Fig. 4. View of thimble wall and open base before conservation. Photograph by Charlie Gordy.*

of the thimble condition prior to conservation is in Table 1. Permission was received from the principal investigator, Douglas Boyd, for Gordy to perform conservation by use of electrolytic reduction methodology to expose more details.

## Conservation and Post-Conservation Examination

The conservation process began on October 26, 2021, using the galvanic-wrap electrolysis methodology. The process took 174 hours, 15 minutes, not including time for monitoring, hand-cleaning, and anode wrap/electrolyte refreshing. Photographs were taken during the periods of monitoring. After 95.5 hours, a design along the border was noticed. After another 52.5 hours (148.0 hours total), the border design became clearer exposing what appeared to be a floral scene completely around the thimble border. In addition, a shield design became visible on the wall along the second row of indentions (dimpling) up to the seventh row. The artifact was wrapped again and prepared with new anode and electrolyte solution. Treatment continued for another 26 hours, 15 minutes, bringing the total time to 174 hours, 15 minutes. A hand-cleaning cycle again was conducted, and the artifact was dehydrated. The artifact was carefully examined under a digital microscope with 75x / 300x magnification along the interior bottom of the cap, along the interior of the border, and the interior of the wall. The dimpling of the interior wall was found to be continuous and complete. The dimpling format was concentric from the border to the top. No design observed on the top. In review, the type of material used in the thimble was confirmed to be copper alloy (most likely brass). The artifact's physical data was measured again to get truer dimensions after conservation (Table 2).

## Manufacture Method

This thimble was manufactured using the deep-draw method. This method was patented in 1769 in England but was underutilized until the 1800s, most likely because it eliminated a lot of skilled guild brass workers. This method

**Table 1. Measurements of thimble prior to conservation**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Base interior diameter: | 14.83 millimeter (mm) | Wall dimpling panel: | 16.86 mm |
| Base to crown top: | 25.69 mm | Border panel: | 4.42 mm |
| Base to wall top: | 22.25 mm | Rolled rim: | 0.97 mm |
| Crown base diameter: | 16 mm | Weight: | 7 grams (gr) |
| Base diameter at rim: | 18.77 mm | | |

**Table 2. Measurements of thimble after conservation**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Base interior diameter: | 16.0 mm | Wall dimpling panel: | 16.62 mm |
| Base to crown top: | 26.44 mm | Border panel: | 6.16 mm |
| Base to wall top: | 24.49 mm | Rolled rim: | 1.44 mm |
| Crown base diameter: | 13.19 mm | Weight: | 5 gr |
| Base diameter at rim: | 18.16 mm | Weight Reduction: | 0.2857%* |

*Most reduction was determined to be concretion material

was a vast improvement over the two-piece method of making copper alloy/brass thimbles. The deep-draw method utilized a series of seven dies over which copper discs were drawn. The progression of drawing completed a thimble "blank" with a rolled rim. The blank thimble was then placed on a rotating thimble shaped anvil, held in place by a leather cushion. A rotating thimble die was then pressed against the thimble as it rotated on the anvil. This technique allowed different dies of various patterns of dimples to be indented and could be used for patterns and mottos or other wording and designs. The dimple pattern used on this thimble was a dot indention which is a pattern used for centuries being individually punched or drilled by hand. The border scene was applied with a different die.

Before the introduction of the deep-draw method, copper alloy thimbles were made in two parts then brazed together to make a complete thimble. The deep-draw method made it possible to mass produce thimbles and by the early 1800s, Birmingham, England, produced and exported thimbles by the millions. The primary noticeable characteristic of the deep-drawn method is the rolled rim at the base of the thimble and the lower profile of the cap.

## Markings

Mass production of brass thimbles made them affordable for the common household. Most were of a plain design or modestly decorated with bands around the border or with mottos. For a brass thimble, the decoration on this thimble is extra ordinary. Very few of thimbles were marked. The post-conservation examination of this thimble's interior top, wall, rim, and border did not disclose any marks or numbers considered as maker marks. A graphic floral scene was revealed along the border exterior. Historically, thimbles produced in England decorated their more elaborately made thimbles with flower scenes. American scenes were commonly that of landscapes and water scenes. It is unknown if any makers patented the artwork of this border daisy design; therefore, this design may not be exclusive to any one maker or country. Along the exterior of the wall starting with the second row of dimplings to the seventh row, a four-pointed shield containing a pictorial embossed design was revealed. The design has been slightly worn smooth from use and not clear but may be the image of some human or animal form. A shield represents a primary element of a coat-of-arms, which was suspected as possibly a hallmark. It may be a representation of a geographical region or perhaps an element of the coat-of-arms of the surname of the manufacturer's founder. However, it may not be a hallmark at all, but merely decoration (Figure 5). A search revealed the shield element is not one associated with the coat-of-arms of Birmingham, England, which was the major area of brass production in the 1800s. Upon further search and examination of photographs of hundreds of thimbles, it was determined that thimbles that originated from other countries exhibited the same four-pointed shield. How-

*Fig. 5. View of thimble wall with shield and floral border after conservation. Photograph by Charlie Gordy.*

ever, of the ones noted, the shield surface was blank apparently for inscribing initials, and all were found on silver or gold thimbles. No shield examples were found on thimbles of non-noble metals. The shield on this specimen is thought to have been applied by brazing to the wall after dimpling, rather than roller die pressed. This opinion is based on the consistent and undisturbed dimples exposed on the thimble's interior.

Not being totally satisfied with our findings thus far, contact was made to an internationally recognized authority on thimbles, Sue Gowan, of Australia. She graciously and enthusiastically accepted the identification challenge and enlisted assistance from colleagues in Australia, England, and Germany. The following references were used: *Metal Sewing Thimbles Found In Britain* by Brian Read (2017); *A History Of Thimbles* by Edwin Holmes (1986); and *Le dé à coudre en France (Tome III)* by Michel Painsonneau (2014). This last book documents the thimble as a "mid-19th century French Directoire style bronze/brass thimble with a decorative floral/foliage border" (Painsonneau 2014:36-37). And of course, a major contributing reference is the individual years of knowledge and experience in thimbles of Sue Gowan and her team of colleagues. The consensus is the thimble was produced in France, with the period ranging from late 18th century to mid-19th century.

## Summary of Findings

It is the opinion of the international experts consulted, the country of origin of the Frost Town thimble is France, and the probable period is late 18th century to mid-19th century. This is primarily based on noted references together with the method of construction, shape, and the floral designed border. No marks or numbers of any kind were observed that could be considered as a maker's mark nor is the shield a relevant mark. Millions of thimbles were produced and exported and very few were marked as laws did not require marks on non-noble metal thimbles. The thimble's maker could not be determined by evidence. As our trusted expert, Sue Gowan, commented, "I think the makers are lost in the mist of time."

## Acknowledgements

The author is thankful to the Principal Investigator Douglas K. Boyd, RPA, Stantec, for the contributions to the Introduction and Discovery and Archeological Context sections of the article. Emma Mattey of HAS contributed to the research. The author is grateful for the assistance provided by research consultant Sue Gowan, of Red Hill Queensland, Australia. Sue is a collector of more than 2,500 thimbles and author of the book *Thimbles of Australia*, together with her contributing colleagues from England, Germany and Australia.

# Notes on Munitions
## A .32 Short Rimfire Cartridge Case from South Texas

*Thomas L. Nuckols*

### Introduction

A rimfire cartridge is a complete round of ammunition fired in a gun, whether a rifle or a handgun. A rimfire cartridge consists of a metallic case, a bullet, gun powder, a primer, and a headstamp. The headstamp is the trademark impressed into the base of the rimfire cartridge case by the ammunition manufacturer.

A rimfire cartridge has its primer sealed internally around the rim of its base. When a gun's firing pin strikes any part of the rimfire cartridge's base, the crushing action will ignite the primer. The primer ignition subsequently ignites the gunpowder. The detonation of the gunpowder creates pressure, which forces the bullet out of the gun barrel (Figure 1).

Unlike the reloadable center-fire cartridge case, the rimfire cartridge case cannot be reloaded after discharge, and it is considered a single use form of ammunition. The rimfire cartridge is designed to be used once, and then the case is thrown away. The disposal of the case usually occurs at the spot where a person extracts the cartridge case from the recently-used firearm.

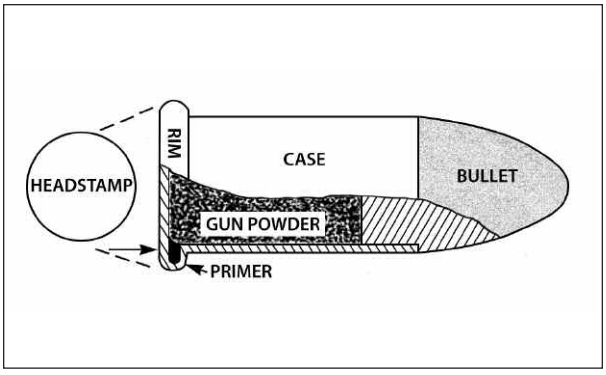



*Fig. 1. A typical rimfire cartridge in partial cross section. The arrow at the base of the rim indicates the area where a gun's firing pin strikes the cartridge to fire it. Illustration by Thomas L. Nuckols.*

### Hiking in South Texas

Many years ago, I was hiking on one of the many dirt roads that crisscross the Henrichson Ranch in Dimmit County. Where the road began to descend into the shallow bed of the intermittent Sauz Mocho Creek, I looked down and spotted a .32 (caliber) Short rimfire cartridge case lying in the dirt (Figure 2). A limestone gravel oil field road with a metal culvert (black arrow) now covers the original dirt road, the approximate spot where the author found the .32 Short rimfire cartridge case years ago. The Nueces River is a little over a mile away to the right. As I picked up the case, I noticed that the case mouth was crushed flat (Figure 3). Its base displayed an impressed diamond headstamp and a circular firing pin imprint (Figure 4). The impressed diamond headstamp was a trademark of the Western Cartridge Company, an American manufacturer of small arms and ammunition. The circular firing pin imprint indicated that the cartridge was fired in a rifle. Conversely, when a rimfire cartridge is discharged from a handgun, the firing pin imprint is rectangular-shaped. A firing pin imprint is sometimes referred to as a firearms signature.

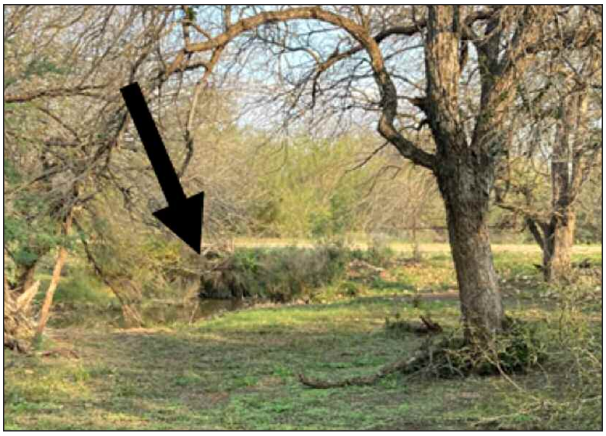


*Fig. 2. Sauz Mocho Creek looking southeast, December 2022. Photograph by Thomas L. Nuckols.*

*Fig. 3. The .32 Short rimfire cartridge case of undetermined metal. Photograph by Thomas L. Nuckols.*

## Headstamps From 1905 to 1930-1931

In 1892, Franklin W. Olin (1860-1951) and several investors established the Equitable Powder Company in East Alton, Illinois. In 1893, the company began producing blasting powder for use in coal mines and limestone quarries. Due to the seasonable nature of these industries, in 1898 Olin and his associates formed a second venture, the Western Cartridge Company (Western) to pursue a market for their blasting powder in the off-season. Western's

*Fig. 4. The diamond-shaped headstamp. The arrow points to the circular firing pin imprint. Photograph by Thomas L. Nuckols.*

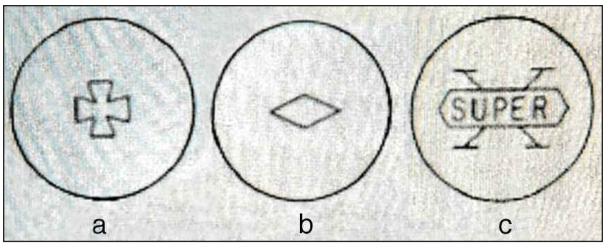



*Fig. 5. Types of headstamps produced by Western Cartridge Company and Union Cap and Chemical Company: a) Maltese Cross, 1905 to 1909; b) Diamond, 1908 to 1930s; c) Super X, 1930-1931 to 1969. Illustration by Thomas L. Nuckols.*

principal product became shotgun shells filled with rifle powder supplied by Equitable. The shotgun shells manufactured by Western used center-fire cartridge primers that were manufactured by other ammunition firms. In 1900, to counter the rising price these firms charged for primers, Olin formed the Union Cap and Chemical Company (UCC), which produced priming mixture and primers. Beginning in 1905, and continuing to 1909, UCC manufactured rimfire cartridges headstamped with an impressed Maltese Cross, the company's trademark (Figure 5a).

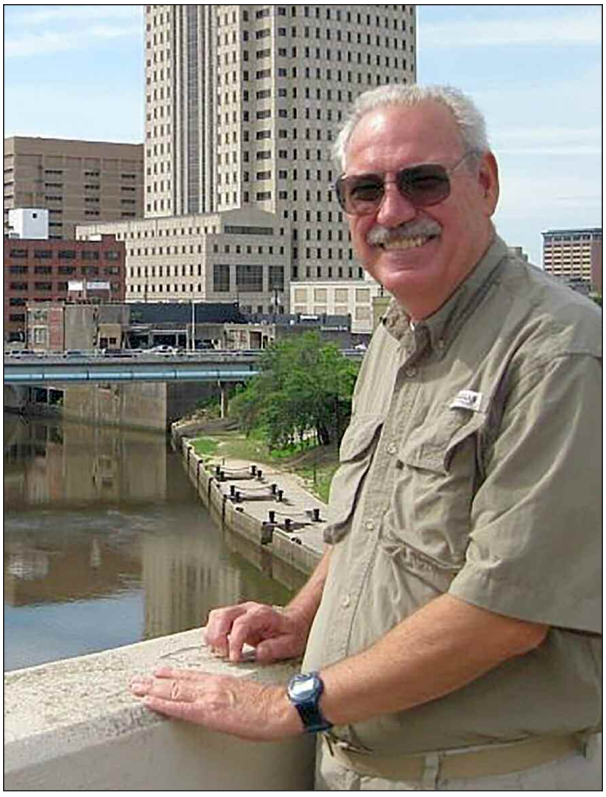
In 1907, UCC and Western merged, and the Maltese Cross trademark was changed to a diamond. The first use of the impressed diamond headstamp on rimfire cartridges occurred on January 8, 1908 and carried into the early 1930s (Figure 5b). During 1930-1931, Western began using a SUPER-X headstamp (Figure 5c). The X referenced the center ring on a paper target (Barber 1987: 68, 71, 86, Wikipedia 2022).

### References

Barber, John L.
1987 *The Rimfire Cartridge 1857-1984*. Armory Publications, Tacoma, WA.

Wikipedia
2022 Western Cartridge Company. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Cartridge_Company.

# Obituary for Louis Frederick Aulbach • 1948–2022



*Louis Frederick Aulbach*

**Louis Frederick Aulbach** was born on July 12, 1948, to Charles Edward Aulbach and Hildegard Lauretta Cox in Houston, Texas, and passed away on December 28, 2022, in Houston. He was a true native son of Texas and of Houston. Louis attended All Saints Catholic School in the Houston Heights, graduated from St. Thomas High School in the class of 1967, and from Rice University in 1971. He continued his education, receiving Master of Arts and Master of Business Administration degrees from the University of Chicago, after which he "got back to Texas as quick as he could." His long professional career in information and records management included tenures with several companies in Houston, culminating in his 18 years as records manager for the City of Houston. He also served proudly in the Texas Army and Air Force National Guards.

Following his retirement from the City of Houston in 2008, he pursued his real passions—writing and digging up the history of Texas with the Houston and Texas Archeological Societies, paddling the rivers of Texas with the Houston Canoe Club, hiking in the Big Bend area of Texas with his children and his "posse" and protecting the historical and archeological resources of Texas as a member of the Texas Archeological Stewards Network. Louis joined the TASN in 2014, and during his 8 years of service to the Texas Historical Commission, he was awarded the Norman Flaigg Certificate of Outstanding Performance in 2015 and 2017, and the Norman Flaigg Honorable Mention in 2016, 2018, 2021 and 2022.

Louis also served on the board of directors of the Houston Archeological Society for several years and was most recently the editor and publisher of the society's Journals and Reports. For his dedication to the society and its goals, he was honored as a distinguished Lifetime Member of the Society. He also took an active role in the society's archeological excavations including those at San Felipe de Austin, Frost Town in Houston, the San Jacinto Battlefield, the Kellum-Noble House, and several other sites around Houston. His efforts resulted in important and lasting contributions to the preservation of historical and archeological sites in Houston. He also attended several weeklong archeological field schools across the state with the Texas Archeological Society. He was an active member of the Houston Canoe Club and served in the past as the club's purser (treasurer) and led many trips for the Canoe Club down the Rio Grande River, the Pecos, the Devils and on Buffalo Bayou. Louis was past president of the Harris County Historical Society and a former member of the Harris County Historical Commission. During his tenure on the Commission, he wrote several of

the markers designating historical sites in the City of Houston.

Louis was the author of sixteen books including five on paddling the Rivers of West Texas including the Rio Grande, the Pecos and the Devils rivers, a hiking guide to Big Bend Ranch State Park, several on the history of Houston including *Buffalo Bayou: An Echo of Houston's Wilderness Past*, two on the history of Camp Logan, a WWI training facility built to house 45,000 soldiers in the area of what is now Memorial Park in Houston, and his most recent guidebook highlighting 25 archeological and historical sites along what is now Buffalo Bayou entitled *The Buffalo Bayou Greenway*. He and his co-author Linda Gorski also wrote a series of 6 walking guides to ancient archeological sites in Rome and Ostia Antica entitled *Rome in Ruins*.

Along with his passion for history was his love for his three children, Rachel, Stephen and Matthew. Not long after they were taking their first steps, Louis brought them into the wilderness. The trio were present on many of his expeditions down the rivers of Texas. As a father, it was important to Louis to pass along is love of adventure. Louis took his family backpacking across the low Sonoran Desert and to the tops of the Rocky Mountains. The lessons of teamwork, creativity, respect, wonder, adaptability, and self-reliance were taught to each child; both in theory through meaningful conversation and practice in the world.

Hand in hand with countless family campouts were regular trips across the ocean. Maintaining strong connections with his German roots provided a jumping off point for many international trips with his children. Stamps from Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, and Austria were in his children's' passports before the advent of the euro. This love for travel has persisted in all three of his children. The love for travel is carried forward as each kid has engaged in their own international expeditions.

Louis is survived by his three children Rachel Aulbach Garcia (Laurence), Stephen Aulbach (Maggie) and Matthew Aulbach (Amanda) and seven beloved grandchildren, Luther, Sullivan (Sully), Laurel, Declan, Annie, Hudson and Travis. He is also survived by his brother, Charles, his sister Lauretta Wallace and numerous nieces and nephews. Services were held in Houston January 3 and 4, 2023.

The family requests that donations be made to the Houston Archeological Society, P. O. Box 130631, Houston, Texas 77219-0631. Please put "Louis Aulbach" in the comment part of the check.

*Obituary printed as published online:*
https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/houston-tx/louis-aulbach-11080886.

**Publications**

2000 Louis Aulbach and Linda Gorski
*The Upper Canyons of the Rio Grande: Presidio to Terlingua Creek, Including Colorado Canyon and Santa Elena Canyon*.

2005 Louis F. Aulbach and Joe Butler
*Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande: La Linda to Dryden Crossing, Maps and Notes for River Runners*.

2005 Louis Aulbach
*The Devils River: Bakers Crossing to the Rough Canyon Marina*.

2008 Louis F. Aulbach and Jack Richardson
*The Lower Pecos River, Pandale to Lake Amistad: Maps and notes for river runners.*

2011 Louis F. Aulbach
*Buffalo Bayou: An echo of Houston's wilderness beginnings*.

2013 Louis F. Aulbach
*The Fresno Rim: and other day hikes in the Big Bend Ranch State Park (Big Bend Ranch State Park Hiking Series)*.

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2014 Louis Aulbach, Linda Gorski et al.
*Great Unknown of the Rio Grande: Terlingua Creek to La Linda, including Boquillas Canyon and Mariscal Canyon*.

2014 Louis Aulbach and Linda C. Gorski
*Camp Logan: Houston, Texas 1917-1919*.

2015 Louis F. Aulbach and Linda C. Gorski
*Along the Aurelian Wall: Self-Guided Walks to the Archeological Ruins of Rome (Rome in Ruins—Self-Guided Walks)*.

2016 Louis F. Aulbach and Linda C. Gorski
*Campus Martius and its Ancient Monuments: Self-Guided Walks to the Archeological Ruins of Rome (Rome in Ruins—Self-Guided Walks)*.

2018 Louis F. Aulbach and Linda C. Gorski
*The Public Land of Ostia Antica: A Walk Through the Land Set Aside by Gaius Caninius for Public Use (Rome in Ruins—Self-Guided Walks). Volume 3*.

2019 Louis F. Aulbach and Linda C. Gorski
*Constantine's Rome: His Transformation of the Roman Empire (Rome in Ruins—Self-Guided Walks)*.

2020 Louis F. Aulbach and Linda C. Gorski
*The Streets of Ancient Ostia: Self-guided Walks to Archeological Sites in Regions I and III of Ostia Antica (Rome in Ruins)*.

2021 Louis F. Aulbach, Linda C. Gorski, et al.
*Inside Camp Logan: The Daily Life of Soldiers at Houston's World War I Training Camp*.

2021 Louis F. Aulbach and Linda C. Gorski
*The Road to Porta Marina: Self-guided Walks to Archeological Sites in Regions III and IV of Ostia Antica*.

2022 Louis F. Aulbach and Linda C. Gorski
*The Buffalo Bayou Greenway: A Walking Guide to 25 Historical Sites That Are Hiding in Plain Sight*.

While comprehensive, this list may not recognize all the publications Louis authored or contributed to throughout the years. Many of these publications are still available on Amazon.com. In addition, Louis served as the editor and publisher of the HAS Journal for several years and the link to the publications page on HAS website is: Journal Archive - Houston Archeological Society (txhas.org)

## Obituary for Steve Stoutamire • 1950–2022

*Steve Stoutamire*

**Steve Stoutamire**, age 72, of San Antonio, Texas, passed away on 11/24/2022.

He is survived by his beloved wife Nancy; his two children, Courtney and Bryan; his mother, Jonnie Stoutamire; his sister Charlotte Pickels, and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Steve was born in Quincy, Florida to Paul and Jonnie Stoutamire on 8/21/1950.

He received a BA in Anthropology from Florida State University in 1972 and an MS in Geology from Texas Tech University in 1975. During a 32-year career in the petroleum industry, he held technical, business and managerial positions in both domestic and international operations.

Steve retired to a ranch in the Texas hill country in 2007, where he raised three longhorns and

several steers. He was an active avocational archeologist and educated the public through teaching classes and giving archeology lectures. He was also a member, past president and field committee chairman of the Hill Country Archeological Association, a member of the Texas Archeology Society, and The Center for the Study of First Americans. He served as the chairman of the Gault School of Archeological Research UT Austin. He also served as a Texas Archeology Steward for the Texas Historical Commission since 2014.

He began his "second retirement" in San Antonio in April of 2022 and enjoyed his time there until his passing.

*Obituary printed as published online:*
https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/houstonchronicle/name/steve-stoutamire-obituary?id=38296974

# **Don't Mess with Texas:** Illegal Digging of an Archeological Site Leads to Conviction

*Tiffany Osburn*

Steve Stoutamire was an excellent geologist and archeologist, and as a fellow steward noted at his Memorial Service, he was creative in his analysis and research. His creative, analytical approach was an invaluable contribution to a unique case that Texas Historical Commission (THC) Regional Archeologist, Tiffany Osburn, was called to investigate. Between 2017 and 2019, a series of events led to the capture, prosecution, and criminal charges of artifact looters in central Texas, which set precedent in Texas courts for prosecution of looters who destroy and damage archeological sites. In collaboration with a game warden, Stoutamire and Osburn investigated the impacts of looting and property destruction and provided evidence for successful criminal charges.

Unfortunately, looting of archeological sites on PRIVATE land is common in Texas. Looting can cause thousands of dollars of property damage, and through theft and vandalism there can be a significant loss of priceless artifacts and invaluable information contained within archeological sites. Previously, misdemeanor-level laws were the only recourse for looting cases. Typical maximum punishment was only a $1000 fine and 30 days in jail—*Texas Natural Resources Code, Title 9, Ch. 191.*

To add to the problem, there is a connection in Texas between artifacts (such as arrowheads) and methamphetamines. Often, looters have a drug connection and are seeking cash for drug manufacture or purchase, by selling artifacts for cash. In 2017, a Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) Officer (i.e., a game warden), arrested two looters in the act of digging on an archeological site in a remote portion of Kerr County, on a private ranch. The game warden sought guidance from Archeology Division of the THC to seek stronger punishment for this crime.

Fortunately, the District Attorney expressed a willingness to bring the case to court and agreed that the looters should be assigned responsibility for the damage to the portion of the site where they were apprehended. Osburn and the game warden determined that use of the existing Texas Criminal Mischief Law (willful and wanton destruction of private property without the owner's consent—*Texas Penal Code Ch. 28)*, would be the most effective to achieve Felony-level punishment of archeological looting on private land. The District Attorney agreed.

Osburn and Stoutamire viewed the damage to the site, took the measurements, and recorded observations necessary to complete a damage assessment report. They used methods for determining Archeological Value for damage assessments on federal lands based on the Archeological Resources Protection Act (*16 U.S.C. 470aa-470mm; Public Law 96-95 and amendments*) and Department of Interior

Guidelines (*NPS Technical Brief 20*). This well-established methodological precedent served as a guide for use on private land and was necessary to arrive at a monetary value of damages for the Criminal Mischief charge.

The local District Attorney agreed to pursue Felony conviction and take the case to a Grand Jury. With the testimony of the game warden and the THC Regional Archeologist, the Grand Jury indicted both looters with 1st Degree Felony Criminal Mischief, with damages assessed at >$300,000.

In February 2019, both looters submitted a plea bargain to the State, pleading guilty to a lesser punishment level under the Criminal Mischief Law. Both looters received significant Deferred Adjudication (Probation) terms with conviction penalties including fines and prison time if terms of strict probation are violated. Both must also pay $1550 in restitution for site backfilling and erosion control in areas of damage. **This unique and *first-time use of the Criminal Mischief Law in a looter case on private land* now gives Law Enforcement Officers, District Attorneys, and Landowners the impetus to catch, seek prosecution, and indict/convict looters with Felony penalties, and will hopefully deter future looting within the State of Texas.** (Case Decided February 4, 2019, Cause B17-672, 198th Judicial District Court, Kerr County, Texas).

Stoutamire and Osburn presented the details of this case at the 2019 TASN Annual Meeting and Workshop in Blanco and to a much broader audience at the 2020 Real Places Conference in Austin.

## Marine Archeology Program

*Amy Borgens*

*Fig. 1. THC Files Drone images December 14, 2022.*

*Fig. 2. Photo by Stephanie Bilodeau, January 20, 2023.*

Since Thanksgiving, the Marine Archeology Program (MAP) has been coordinating with local volunteers and steward Keith Reynolds to monitor site 41CF125, known as Boca Chica Shipwreck No. 1, which eroded from the beach following a storm. The 88-ft. long 19th-century shipwreck is a State Antiquities Landmark that was brought to the attention of the agency in 1980 when it was exposed by Hurricane Allen. Originally the site was in the dunes, on private property, but due to large-scale coastal regression along the south Texas coast since 1980, the vessel is now in the intertidal area and is more frequently exposed by weather

events. The MAP made a quick visit to examine the condition of the shipwreck on December 14 (Figure 1), but has depended on local accounts to monitor the currently evolving site conditions (Figure 2). Often these coastal sites in Texas are reburied within a week or two (sometimes even days), but 41CF125 has surprisingly remained visible above the sediment for several months and has received a lot of local visitations.

## Texas Archeology Month

*Maggie Moore*

*TASN Steward Jim Schmidt (left), and volunteers from Goshawk Environmental Consulting help assemble pinch pot kits at the AD's archeology lab. THC photo.*

*Students from Rosehill Christian School in Tomball help assemble pinch pot kits for a service project coordinated by TASN Steward Sharon Menegaz. THC photo.*

***Texas Archeology Month (TAM) 2022 was a great success!*** There were 52 events on the TAM calendar, both virtual and in-person, held in 34 counties across the state, sponsored by more than 81 partners, including the relaunch of the Austin TAM fair at THC's French Legation Historic Site. The THC partnered with several organizations, CRM firms, and volunteer groups, such as the South Asian's International Volunteer Association (SAIVA) in Austin, to assemble and distribute more than 6,000 archeology activity kits to students across Texas. The TASN was critical to the success of TAM activities across the state, and especially with activity kit distribution, as numerous stewards helped assemble kits and pass them out at events in their regions.

If you are unfamiliar with activity kits, when the 2021 TAM Fair in Austin was canceled due to the pandemic, THC and its TAM partners reimagined the in-person archeology fair activities into something that students, teachers, and community members can engage in within their own spaces. These activities evolved into the creation of the archeology activity kits that can be distributed around the state, with supplementary information made available through online, virtual guidance. The THC partnered with the Texas Archeology Research Lab (TARL) to provide nearly 2,000 archeology activity kits to 23 schools, daycares, and individual families in central Texas through the Children's Museum, the Thinkery, and local Austin businesses. The 400 kits produced by the THC were a variation on the THC's pinch pot activity table at the annual TAM fair. The kits included a ball of clay, tools, and instructions to create a decorative pinch pot—a method to build vessels used by many cultures. The kits are a way for students to "touch history" through the tangible recre-

*Continues next page*

*Participants visiting the TAM pinch pot table at the French Legation TAM Fair. THC photo.*

*Students show off their creations at the pinch pot kit activity at the Michelson Museum of Art in Marshall. THC photo.*

ation of the work and artistry of the people who came before us. They were so well received by students and educators that the TAM program continued the project in 2022, expanding kit distribution to student and community groups around the state and providing kits to be handed out at in-person events. As we continue to grow the program, our goal for TAM 2023 is to distribute 10,000 kits. Keep an eye out for calls for volunteers on the TASN listserv this spring and summer to assist with assembly and distribution of pinch pot kits and participation in the French Legation TAM fair. Let the TAM Team know if you need kits to distribute at your 2023 events by sending an email to:

TAM@thc.texas.gov

It is never too soon to prepare for your 2023 events, please visit the TAM webpage to order Archeology Division public outreach materials:

https://thc.texas.gov/forms/archeology-division-public-outreach-materials

*THC employees (and their families) help assemble pinch pot kits at the AD Archeology Lab. THC photo.*

*Community volunteer group SAIVA works with students to assemble pinch pot kits for distribution. THC photo.*

# Workshop Announcement

## Consultation and Collaboration: A Starting Point for Museums and Indigenous Tribes

*Marie Archambeault*

*Workshop Facilitators Nan Blassingame and Angie Glasker presenting at the February 27 workshop held at the Bullock Texas State History Museum. Photo by Marie Archambeault.*

This spring, TxDOT, the THC, the Bullock Texas State History Museum, and the Tribal Advisory Committee are collaborating on a series of workshops that will be offered around the state in 2023.

Participants will learn the importance of building lasting relationships with federally recognized American Indian tribes in Texas, or ancestral to Texas, as well as how to integrate tribal history and culture into state and local interpretation. Examples of how American Indians have been represented in museums in the past will be contrasted with how they are represented in collaborative or Indigenous-led exhibits.

Topics discussed will include identifying culturally insensitive interpretation and practices in your own institution and when and why it's necessary to work with tribes when making those assessments. Participants will learn who to contact within tribes, how to contact them, how to cultivate that two-way relationship, and how to be respectful of their knowledge and artifacts. Workshops are from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Registration is $35 per person and includes lunch.

**Tuesday, March 28**

Museum of South Texas History/Edinburg

**Thursday, March 30**

Museum of the Coastal Bend/Victoria

**Tuesday, April 18**

Gregg County Historical Museum/Longview

**Thursday, April 20**

Grace Museum/Abilene

**Tuesday, May 2**

Centennial Museum and Chihuahuan Gardens/ El Paso

**Thursday, May 4**

Palo Duro Canyon State Park/Canyon

**Follow-Up Webinars**

Thursday, June 22 and Thursday, June 29, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Registration for the full-day in-person workshops and one-hour virtual follow-up webinars will be open now at:

www.thc.texas.gov/museum-services

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# TASN Upcoming Events and Publications

## Upcoming Events

### March 24-26, 2023

**TAS Archeology 101 Academy**

Learn the basics about how to perform archeology in the field, lab, and reporting through classroom and field instruction. No experience is required. The Archeology 101 Academy is a great introduction to archeological methods. For more information and to register please visit the TAS website. Membership to the TAS is required to attend.

https://www.txarch.org/Archeology-101/

Scholarships are available at:

https://txarch.org/get-involved/scholarships

and:

https://ntxas.org/scholarships

### May 6, 2023

**TASN Annual Meeting and Workshop**

The meeting will be held at Fort Concho, San Angelo, Texas. A detailed agenda, location maps and registration information will be sent out to the stewards' listserv early this Spring.

### June 10-17, 2023

**TAS Annual Field School**

The field school will be held in Nacogdoches County. Dr. Tamra Walter, TASN Advisor and current TAS president, will serve as PI and will be joined by regional experts to investigate Spanish Colonial Mission-related sites in the Caddo region.

https://www.txarch.org/Field-School

### October 6-8, 2023

**94th TAS Annual Meeting**

The meeting will be held in San Marco, Texas. Typically, the TASN meet for a business meeting Friday during the meetings. As we get closer to the meeting, additional information will be posted on the TAS website:

https://www.txarch.org/Annual-Meeting

## Links to Resources

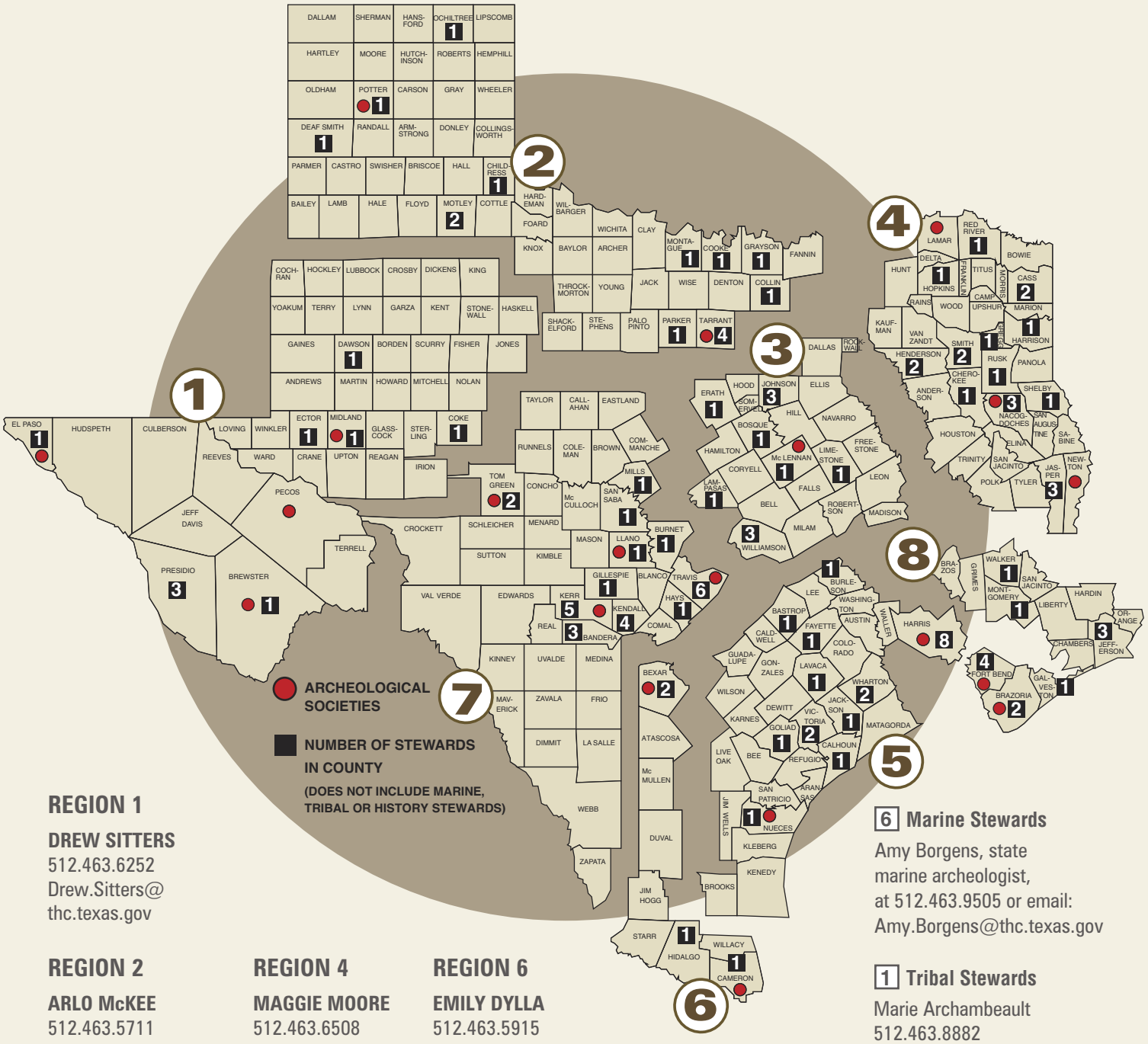
Check out the blog of the Travis County Historical Commission, where History Stewards Bob Ward, Rich Denney and Lanny Ottosen have contributed and published articles on their work:

https://traviscountyhistorical.blogspot.com/

Austin History Center Association—Mary Kahle, TASN History Steward, currently serves as the Chair of the Oral History project, and the interviews are online and available for viewing:

https://www.austinhistory.net/oral-history

# Texas Historical Commission's Non-Regulatory Regions

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### 1 Tribal Stewards

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### 4 History Stewards

Jenny McWilliams at 512.475.4506 or email: Jenny.McWilliams@thc.texas.gov

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

# TEXAS ARCHEOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP NETWORK
# CALL FOR STEWARD NOMINATIONS

Nominee's name _____ Home phone ( _____ ) _____

Address _____ Work phone ( _____ ) _____

City/County _____ Zip _____ Email address _____

Please discuss any special areas of interest, expertise or skill that make this nominee a good candidate for the stewardship network. If you have worked directly with the nominee, please describe what you did together. If more space is needed, please continue your description on a separate sheet, and include it when you submit your nomination.

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Nominated by _____ Date _____

Daytime phone ( _____ ) _____

Additional reference (other than nominator) _____

Send forms to: Texas Historical Commission
Archeology Division
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711-2276

For more information: 512.463.6096 fax: 512.463.8927

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# TASNnews Call for Submissions

Please use the following format to submit articles and other content to the TASN Newsletter. Please note that content may be edited by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) staff for length and clarity. The Archeology Division does not guarantee that articles submitted will be used in the publication. Authors will be contacted whether the article will or will not be used.

## Style and Length

1. First and Last name
2. Contact email and phone
3. Title for submission
4. Content Chicago Manual of Style
5. 250-750 words; longer articles may be accepted with previous coordination.

## Submission

Articles should be emailed to Donna.McCarver@thc.texas.gov or mailed to Donna McCarver, Archeology Division, Texas Historical Commission, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276.

- Include "TASN Newsletter" in subject line of email
- When you send your submission, please include all relevant attachments (photos, tables, etc.) in one email message or mailed submission. Content must be formatted in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or Notepad (.txt or .rtf)
- Submission should not have photos or other graphics embedded in the Word file (see Photographs below) but include notations in the text where graphics should appear (ie. Figure 1, Description). Photos and other graphics should be submitted in the same email message as the text.

## Acknowledgement of Submissions

The editors will confirm receipt of manuscripts within 2-4 weeks. Written reminders from the author after this period are welcome.

## Publication Date

On acceptance, an estimated date of publication may be provided to the author. Some submissions may be held for future publications.

## Editing

On accepted manuscripts, the editors reserve the right to make editorial revisions, deletions, or additions which, in their opinion, support the author's intent. When changes are substantial, every effort is made to work with the author.

## Photographs, Images and Maps

Digital photographs are preferred. Images should be submitted in TIFF or JPEG format with a minimum of 300 dpi. Captions and photo credits for use must be included. In addition, please include first and last name of each person appearing in photos.

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Vol. 1, No. 3

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

**OUR MISSION**

To protect and preserve the state's historic and prehistoric resources for the use, education, enjoyment and economic benefit of present and future generations.

**TASNnews** is published by the Archeology Division of the Texas Historical Commission. Address correspondence to:

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