

ARCHAEOLOGY IN TUCSON

Vol. 1, No.2

Newsletter of the Institute for American Research

Winter 1986

WHAT IS ARCHAEOLOGY IN TUCSON?

Archaeology in Tucson is the membership program of the Institute for American Research. Briefly summarized, the program goals are to:

- Conduct active research in and around Tucson
- Increase public awareness of local archaeology
- Interpret local archaeological resources
- Preserve important archaeological sites
- Achieve public involvement in local archaeology

While all of these goals are closely interrelated, we intentionally placed "Conduct active research" at the top of the list. This reflects our belief that only through an active research program can the maximum benefit be gained from archaeological sites and artifacts. Active research leads to the discovery of new sites that cause us to change our perspectives, and it stimulates us to see known sites and artifacts in new and different ways. This commitment to active research ensures that *Archaeology in Tucson* will be a dynamic and exciting program.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CALENDAR

- January 14 *Archaeology in Tucson* Special Meeting. Topic: "Petroglyphs and Platform Mounds." The Randolph Center Complex Auditorium, 200 South Alvernon Way, 7:00 P.M. Free.
- January 24 *Archaeology in Tucson* Annual Tour. Visit petroglyphs and a platform mound site in the Picacho Mountains. For members only. Free.
- March 22-28 Arizona Archaeology Week. A variety of local events and site tours. Members will receive a mailing in early March.
- March 23 *Archaeology in Tucson* Spring Meeting. Topic: "The Historic Archaeology of Early Tucson." Tentative location: Randolph Center Complex Auditorium, 200 S. Alvernon Way, 7:30 P.M. Free.

SPECIAL MEETING—PETROGLYPHS

AND PLATFORM MOUNDS

On Wednesday night, January 14, *Archaeology in Tucson* will hold a special meeting as an introduction to our annual site tour of the petroglyphs of the Picacho Mountains. Henry Wallace, Research Archaeologist with the Institute for American Research, will present a slide show on the diverse set of Archaic and Hohokam petroglyphs that he and Jim Holmlund spent several years studying. We will also visit a Hohokam platform mound site near the Picachos that was recently excavated by the Museum of Northern Arizona. Both studies were funded by the Bureau of Reclamation.

The annual site tour has been rescheduled from January 18 to January 24. The field trip is open only to *Archaeology in Tucson* members, and there is no charge. Details for the field trip will be covered at the meeting—7:00 P.M. at the Randolph Center Complex Auditorium, 200 South Alvernon Way (the northeast corner of Reid Park). Members who can't make the meeting but want to go on the field trip must call Tom Kolaz at 622-6663 by January 21.



Petroglyph panel from the Picacho Mountains.

What are petroglyphs? Who made them? What do they mean? How old are they? The designs pecked into rocks by Indians long ago impress us with their beauty and leave us with many questions about their meaning. To study petroglyphs requires long hours searching the mountain slopes and scrambling over rocky outcrops. But the rewards when the study is completed are highly satisfying. Henry Wallace will share some of the results of his studies with all of us. Don't miss this opportunity!

EXPLORING TUCSON'S PAST

FIRST HOHOKAM CANAL SYSTEM IN THE TUCSON BASIN

The words "Hohokam" and "canal irrigation" go together almost by definition. And yet until last fall no canal systems had been documented by archaeologists in the Tucson Basin. Several possible canals had been reported and most archaeologists assumed that the canals were out there somewhere, but solid evidence remained elusive.

During October and November, 1986, the Institute for American Research conducted fieldwork funded by AMCOR Investment Corporation that uncovered portions of three separate main canals. All three were located near the north end of the Tucson Mountains. Unlike the prehistoric canals in the Phoenix area, these canals were relatively small, measuring from 3 to 5 feet wide and only 2 feet deep. Part of the reason that the canals were small is that the area explored was near the end of the canal system. Thus, this was the area where Hohokam farmers were applying water to their fields. Pollen samples that will be analyzed over the next several months will hopefully reveal the kinds of crops that were being grown and will provide insights into the kinds of vegetation that was growing along the canals.

Slightly below the level of the canals, a small habitation area was discovered. Sometime before the canals were constructed, simple field camps, probably just ramadas to provide protection from the summer sun, were established. The ramadas were next to two shallow wells that tapped the high ground water table and would have provided drinking water.

As archaeologists had long suspected, the Tucson Basin Hohokam did practice canal irrigation. Their canals were probably located only within the floodplain of the river, for there is no evidence for extensive canal systems such as are found around Phoenix. As a result, the intensive agriculture, flooding episodes, and urban development that have occurred along the Santa Cruz floodplain have destroyed, or at least obscured, much of the evidence of Hohokam irrigation systems in the Tucson area. AMCOR is to be commended for supporting this important contribution to Tucson Basin archaeology.



AN ANCIENT MAP PECKED INTO STONE?

"Pregnant Rabbit Lady" is the name given to one of the more enigmatic petroglyphs of the Picacho Mountains by its initial discoverers. While Henry Wallace and Jim Holmlund were completing their study, they frequently returned to this impressive glyph that seemed to meander with an unknown purpose over the surface of the largest boulder at the site. It was a friend who is not an archaeologist who was the first to see the meaning in this special glyph. He saw it as an outline map of the ridge on which the petroglyph site is located. The glyph and the outline of the ridge are reproduced here to illustrate the similarities.



Petroglyph map (left) and outline of ridge where site is located drawn from a modern topographic map (right).

While some differences are evident between these two sketches, their similarities are very close. Furthermore, Wallace believes that some of the lines and squiggles that appear on the Hohokam glyph are representations of features such as trails and quarries that can still be observed today. This is just one of the many glyphs that will be shown in slides at the next *Archaeology in Tucson* meeting.

Another case of a Hohokam petroglyph map can be seen by visitors at the Kitt Peak Observatory west of Tucson. That glyph is a map of a group of Hohokam pithouses. The large boulder with the glyphs is roofed and enclosed in glass. It is just out front of the visitor's center, so don't miss it next time you visit Kitt Peak.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

MEMBERSHIP: IT'S TIME TO JOIN!!!

Archaeology in Tucson is off to a good start, but we need your support if we are to be successful. We have intentionally kept membership rates very low. But roughly eight dollars of the ten dollar individual membership goes to costs like newsletter printing and postage.

We will do our best to bring Tucson's archaeology to you, but we need to build our membership base in order to do this. Please mail your membership form today and feel good about helping to preserve Tucson's past. If you are already a member, then tell your friends about us.

TUCSON BASIN CONFERENCE A SUCCESS

Nearly 200 people attended the Second Tucson Basin Conference that was held on November 14th. Twenty-eight papers were delivered, and most described the results of recent fieldwork. These papers are being revised, and it is planned that most of them will be published in a volume that will come out in mid-1987. Look for an announcement in the July *AIT Newsletter*.

ARIZONA ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK: 1987

The theme of this year's Archaeology Week is "Take Pride in the Past: 100 Years of Arizona Archaeology." *Archaeology in Tucson* will offer at least one site tour during that week, and we are preparing exhibits for both the State Capitol and the Tucson City Hall. By early March we will provide *AIT* members with a special mailing about all of the Archaeology Week activities in the Tucson area.



THE SPRING MEETING

The Spring Meeting will be held on Monday, March 23 during Arizona Archaeology Week at 7:30 P.M. The tentative location is the Randolph Center Complex Auditorium, 200 South Alvernon Way. The Spring Meeting will be featuring slides and discussion of "The Historic Archaeology of Early Tucson."

T-SHIRTS

Archaeology in Tucson T-shirts with the *AIT* logo, a stylized design from a Hohokam pottery jar, can be purchased from the Institute. The buff colored shirts are made of 100% cotton and the *AIT* logo is a rust color. These shirts make wonderful gifts and help support and promote *Archaeology in Tucson*. They cost \$9.00 per shirt and are available in S, M, L, and XL. Please use the order blank on the membership application.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXHIBITS

On December 20, an exhibit on the Paleoindian inhabitants of the Tucson Basin that was prepared by the Institute for American Research was opened at the Old Pueblo Museum in the Foothills Mall. The grand opening of the entire museum is scheduled for January 15, 1987.

The Institute's exhibit on Hohokam life at the Tanque Verde Wash Site is open daily at Fairfield's Coronado Ridge, 10150 East Speedway.



FIRST AIT MEETING A SUCCESS!

On the evening of October 1 some 50 persons assembled at the Meeting Place at the Foothills' Mall to participate in *Archaeology in Tucson's* first Fall Meeting. The results of recent survey and excavation at the Valencia Site, and a Hohokam ball court village on Tucson's south side were presented in a slide show by Institute Director William Doelle.

HELP PROTECT THE VALENCIA SITE

The City of Tucson has plans to preserve the site and to develop it into an active research program and interpretive center. *Archaeology in Tucson* is working closely with the City. We have a program to monitor the site to prevent serious vandalism and a grant proposal for site fencing was recently submitted.

If you would like to contribute two hours each month to the Valencia site monitoring program, please call Tom Kolaz at 622-6663.

INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN RESEARCH



INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN RESEARCH

Archaeology in Tucson
245 South Plumer, Suite 14
Tucson, Arizona 85719