

ARCHAEOLOGY IN TUCSON

Vol. 10, No. 2

Newsletter of the Center for Desert Archaeology

Spring 1996

Reflections on Our First Decade

by William H. Doelle, Executive Director, Center for Desert Archaeology

WHAT IS ARCHAEOLOGY IN TUCSON? This is the question that greeted nearly 800 people who received the large-format, glossy-paper mailing that was the first AIT newsletter. That was nearly a decade ago—August of 1986, to be exact. Since then, 38 additional newsletters covering a wide variety of topics have been published. In our first newsletter, we tried to show that the question of Archaeology in Tucson's identity has many possible answers. And, as we now approach our second decade, this fact is more true than ever.

IT'S THE NEWSLETTER. Of course, *Archaeology in Tucson* is the Center for Desert Archaeology's newsletter. It has been our most visible program, and it has evolved considerably over time. I served as editor for the first 17 issues, Allen Dart edited the next 14, and this is Homer Thiel's eighth issue. Initially, the newsletter consisted of four pages, with occasional six- or eight-page issues. In June of 1991, the current eightpage format was permanently adopted. Donna Breckenridge, Desert Archaeology's publications manager, took over newsletter production in January of 1994, and she is constantly striving to improve its graphic quality.

IT'S THE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM. Archaeology in Tucson is also the Center's membership program. Over the years, Center members have contributed tremendously to our understanding of the archaeology of southern Arizona. Surveys of Catalina State Park, Gunsight Mountain, Coyote Mountain, the Lower San Pedro, and the Cienega Valley have resulted in nearly a thousand archaeological sites being recorded. There have also been excavations at the Romero Ruin, Los Morteros, Tucson's Presidio wall, and most recently at Sunset Park. In each case, Center volunteers have played major roles in documenting Tucson's past.

The membership program recently gained a substantial boost with the appointment of Lisa Armstrong as the Center for Desert Archaeology's new programs manager. She is briefly profiled on page 7.

IT'S LEARNING ABOUT AND HELPING TO PRESERVE THE PAST. Searching for new knowledge and understanding about southern Arizona's rich heritage is the ultimate motivator for the Center. The myriad of topics that are currently being explored by researchers is constantly changing and expanding. This newsletter brings together a series of smaller articles in order to provide a brief glimpse of our diversity.

WHAT DOES OUR FUTURE HOLD? As we discover new information about the past, the learning process just gets more and more exciting. As southern Arizona continues to be developed, concern over protecting and preserving this rich heritage grows. Research, education, and publication are the critical elements for achieving preservation, so these are the areas where we will continue to focus our attention.

INNOVATIVE WORKSHOPS. Our goal is to offer a series of workshops that can bring new perspectives on the past. The first workshop will be conducted by Jane Sliva and Dr. Jenny Adams, experts on chipped and ground stone, respectively. Originally scheduled for May, it will now be offered in the fall. Other topics are also under development, and your suggestions are requested.

A NEW PUBLICATION SERIES: THE ARCHAEOLOGY LIBRARY. As repositories for recorded information, libraries are between 4,000 and 5,000 old. These venerable institutions have evolved over millennia so that they now feature diverse media—ancient manuscripts, books, journals, films, maps, CD-ROMS, and even gateways to the Internet. Therefore, the library is an apt metaphor for our new general interest series, for we anticipate developing a rich repository of information about the past.

The first publication written specifically for the Archaeology Library will be released in May. Titled *Archaeology in the Mountain Shadows: Exploring the Romero Ruin*, it describes a survey and excavations done by Center volunteers in Catalina State Park. This booklet is a supplement to the material presented on the interpretive trail through the Romero Ruin, but it is also much more. The rock art found north of the park, the remarkable Romo Cache of beads and copper bells, and the ballcourt villages of the Tucson Basin are other topics. The authors are Deborah Swartz and William Doelle.

Inside This Issue



- Classic period projectile points, page 2
- Rincon Polychrome ceramics, page 3
- Hohokam pottery and rock art, pages 4-5
- AIT volunteers in action, page 6
- A modern-day Clovis hunter, page 7
- The Center's new programs manager, page 7

Tracing the Production of Rincon Polychrome Ceramics

by James M. Heidke, Center for Desert Archaeology



Rincon Polychrome was a short-lived ceramic type produced in the Tucson area from approximately A.D. 1040 to 1100. Virtually all of the archaeological specimens have been recovered from the Tucson Basin, and even within this area, Rincon Polychrome is a relatively rare type. At excavated sites occupied during the time it was produced, rarely is more than one sherd out of 200 Rincon Polychrome.

Within the local ceramic tradition, Rincon Polychrome manufacture was an innovative development. The pots were created by applying painted designs onto polished, red-slipped bowls and jars. The designs were commonly painted in black on top of a white-slipped background, painted in black directly on the red slip, or black-and-white designs were both painted on the red-slipped surface. Other variants, seen only on bowls, utilized black-on-white, red- and black-on-brown, red-on-brown, or black-on-brown exterior design schemes with a red-slipped interior surface.

A unique stirrup-spouted Rincon Polychrome vessel decorated with a white-on-red design was shown in the last issue of *Archaeology in Tucson*. The painted designs themselves reveal a close relationship between Rincon Polychrome and Middle Rincon Red-on-brown, a pottery type produced around A.D. 1000 to 1100. The design elements and most layouts are similar or identical in the two types.

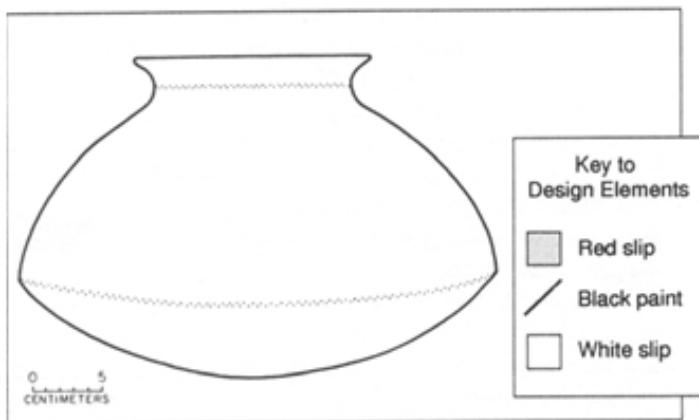
Rincon Polychrome is thought to have been produced by a limited set of interacting potters. Certainly more than one or two potters were involved, but the overall number was probably not large.

Over the last decade, the sand temper composition of more than 200 Rincon Polychrome sherds from 10 sites has been analyzed. More than 80 percent of these sherds exhibit a distinctive volcanic sand temper grain, biotite-bearing rhyolite, that is present only in washes draining the Beehive Peak formation of the southern Tucson Mountains.

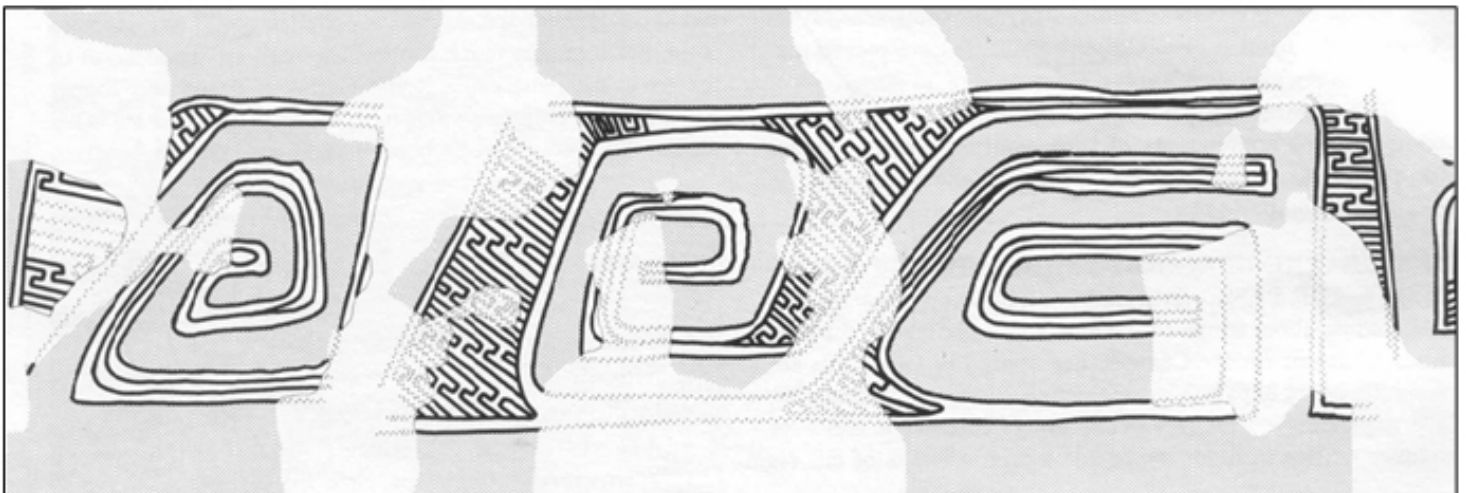
The West Branch site is located east of that formation in the vicinity of these washes. Three separate excavations at that site have produced abundant evidence of ceramic production, and nearly all of the Rincon Polychrome from West Branch is tempered with the distinctive volcanic sand.

About two-thirds of the Rincon Polychrome recovered from other sites in the area is also tempered with this type of sand. Thus, there is strong evidence that potters residing in the West Branch community made most of the Rincon Polychrome. A model of annual ceramic production rates, based on population and pottery use-life estimates, indicates that be-

(continued on page 3)

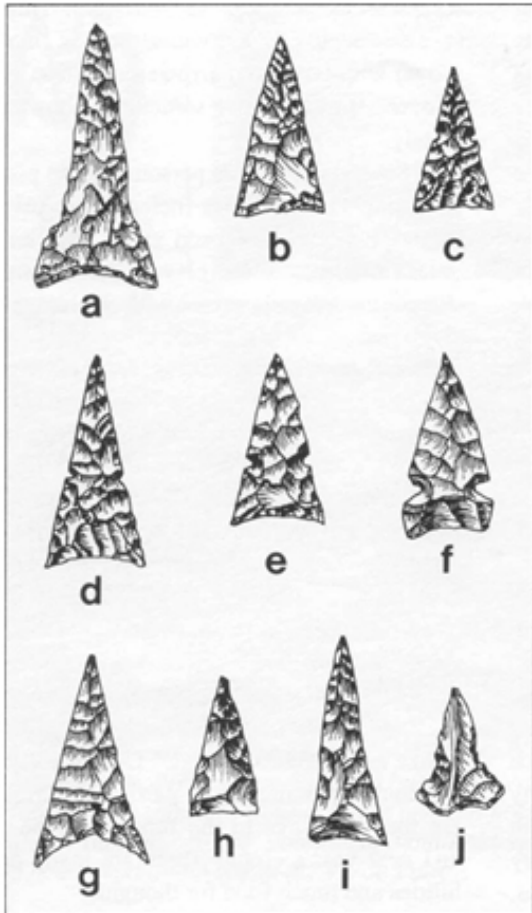


Artist's illustration of Rincon Polychrome jar recovered from Los Morteros (left) and detail of design (below).



Classic Period Projectile Points: A New Typology for the Tonto Basin

by R. Jane Sliva, Center for Desert Archaeology



Desert Archaeology's recent excavations in the Tonto National Forest, near Payson, Ariz., resulted in the recovery of a prodigious number of flaked stone projectile points dating to the late Sedentary and early Classic periods (A.D. 1075-1350). They can be separated into the seven types illustrated here.

Of particular interest are the side-notched types, which were the most prevalent and potentially the most temporally sensitive point styles in the Classic period. Side notches first occurred in the Ash Creek phase (A.D. 1075-1150) of the late Sedentary period and persisted through the Gila phase of the late Classic period (1350-1450). This type encompasses six distinct subtypes defined by notch placement and basal shape. Points with side notches placed high, above the midpoint, are exclusively associated with the Ash Creek phase (c). Through the Classic period Miami and Roosevelt phases (1150-1350), the side notches tend to be placed progressively lower on the points (d and e), with the lowest notch placement ultimately occurring in the terminal Classic Gila phase, from 1350 to 1450 (t). Lower notches result in a longer exposure of the blade edge, potentially making a more lethal weapon.

The explosion of stylistic variability in the Classic period, illustrated here, was accompanied by a dramatic increase in the relative amounts of projectile points recovered from sites; these trends are echoed in Classic period settlements in the Tucson Basin as well. This, along with the increased efficiency of the dominant point type, may be an indicator of increased hostilities across a wide region of Arizona during this time period.

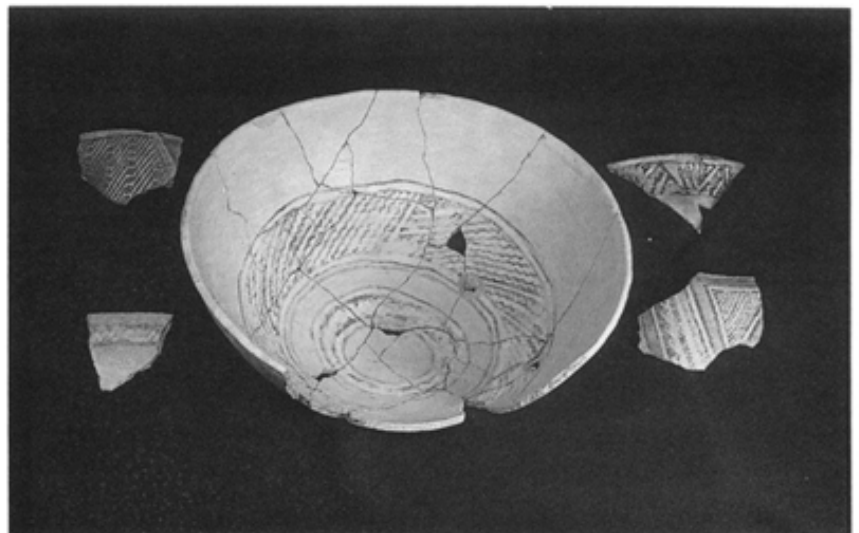
Late Sedentary and Classic period points, arranged in temporal order: (a) Classic flanged; (b) Classic thin triangular; (c) Ash Creek/Early Classic side-notched; (d, e) Middle Classic side-notched; (f) Late Classic side-notched; (g) Classic concave-base triangular; (h) Classic triangular; (i) Classic long triangular; (j) Classic bulbous-based. For most types, the number of examples per type ranges from 4 to 11; 177 Classic side-notched examples were recorded.

(continued from page 2)

tween 60 and 250 Rincon Polychrome vessels were produced in the West Branch community each year. This amount could have been produced easily by a limited set of potters working only part-time.

Of particular interest are the Rincon Polychrome pots that were not made in the West Branch community. Given the unusual technology involved in this pottery type's manufacture, it seems plausible that the potters who made these Rincon Polychrome vessels were related to potters residing at West Branch.

Right: Rincon Polychrome bowl and sherds. The jar sherd in the lower right corner is from the Tohono Chul site. The other three bowl sherds and whole bowl are from West Branch.



Hohokam Images Provide Rare Glimpse of Prehistoric Lives

by Henry D. Wallace
Center for Desert
Archaeology

Archaeology lies in the realm of imagination. We must constantly visualize what a prehistoric house looked like or what it must have been like to live in southern Arizona when there were flowing river and smog-free skies. It is rare indeed to get a glimpse of the people themselves and how they viewed their world.

A wonderful exception is seen in the pottery and rock drawings of the Hohokam. Human figures in various forms, attire, and activities were painted on buffware pottery produced by the Hohokam in the Gila River Valley south of modern Phoenix. They are also very common in the images the Hohokam pecked on patinated boulders and cliff faces throughout central and southern Arizona. The images seen on this page date from about A.D. 800 to 1100.

Regardless of the intended meaning of the human images drawn by the Hohokam, they offer a fascinating view of how they viewed themselves and their world. Several themes seem to thread through the more detailed and active images. Most common are dance scenes and the ritual regalia that accompany them. Sometimes the dancers are shown with hand-held rattles and attached leg rattles. They are often adorned with feather headdresses, and they sometimes carry multi-toothed wands.

Another clear theme relates to fertility and childbirth. Several extraordinary rock art scenes illustrate childbirth, and copulation scenes are present, though quite rare. Hunting is also depicted, as witnessed by hunters shown with bows and arrows pointed at sheep or deer. Bows are also sometimes shown separately.

Several distinctive personages are present in Hohokam art. These include flute players, figures holding canes and staff, and burden basket carriers. Flute players are commonly shown, though only rarely with the hunchback characteristic of the Anasazi Kokopelli. The staff and cane holding personages are suggestive of age and status. The burden basket carrier is invariably shown with a curve-top staff.

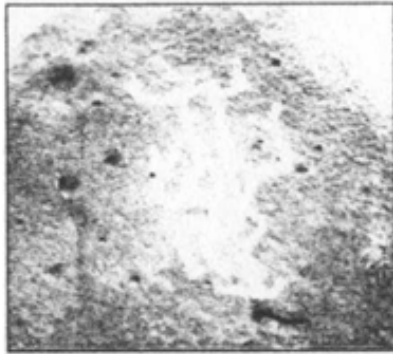
What do these images tell us? Beyond the obvious story-telling aspects of the designs and the clear depictions of items of adornment or utility, such is the tump-line burden baskets, gourd rattles, and flutes (none of which have ever been recovered from a Hohokam site), the repetitive character of many of the images may hint at particular cultural myths.

Seemingly mundane activities may symbolize mythological events. Do the scenes of childbirth commemorate particular births, or are they offerings to the fertility of the soils and next year's crops? There are many possibilities and much food for thought!



Possible childbirth scene on rock art panel in the Picacho Mountains. The mother is above, with infant and umbilical cord attached to placenta below.





Dancing figures at Picture Rocks near Tucson. By permission of the School of American Research, Santa Fe, photo by David Noble. 1990.

Above (clockwise): Pottery depiction of a hunter with a bow and arrow (note quiver shown in front of bow); unusual horned (and tailed?) shamanic figure; and line of hand-holding dancers at a mountaintop site in the Verde Valley.



All array of human figure's from Hohokam pottery.

AIT Volunteers Help Explore Sunset Park

by J. Homer Thiel, Center for Desert Archaeology

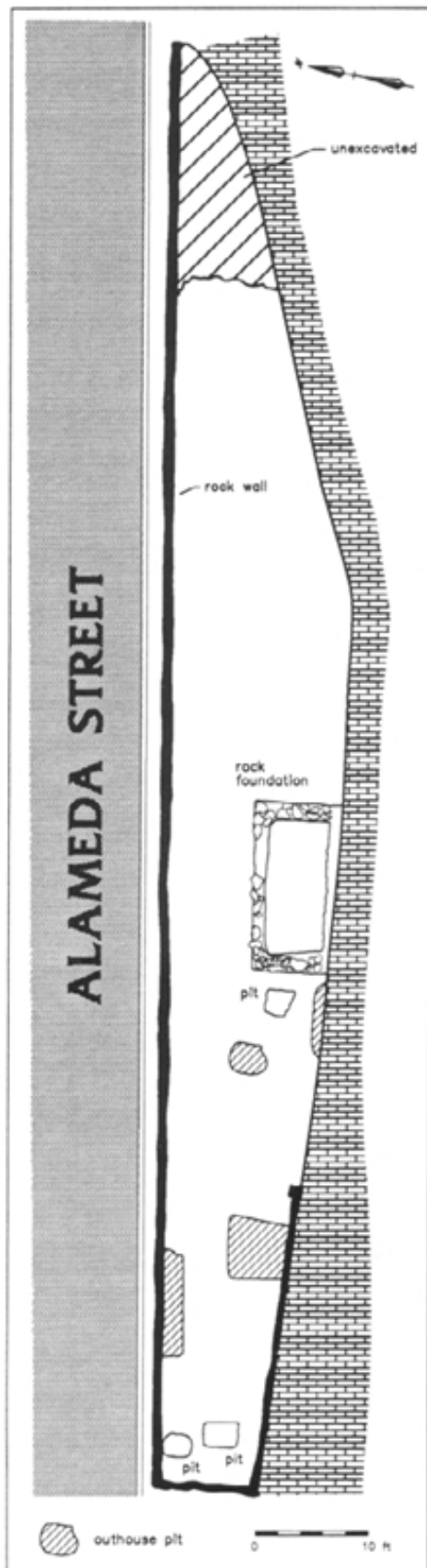
Archaeology in Tucson volunteers recently participated in test excavations at Sunset Park, located in front of the Tucson City Hall at the southwest corner of Main Avenue and Alameda Street. Planned relandscaping and relocation of a parking lot threatened archaeological resources in the park, which lies within the Tucson Presidio.

AIT members helped excavate test units, screen dirt to recover artifacts, and sort items for later analysis. One test unit documented a lime plaster floor. Under the floor was a trash layer dating to the 1840s and 1850s, including many transfer print ceramic sherds. Nearby was a rock foundation from a building depicted on the 1862 Fergusson map of Tucson.

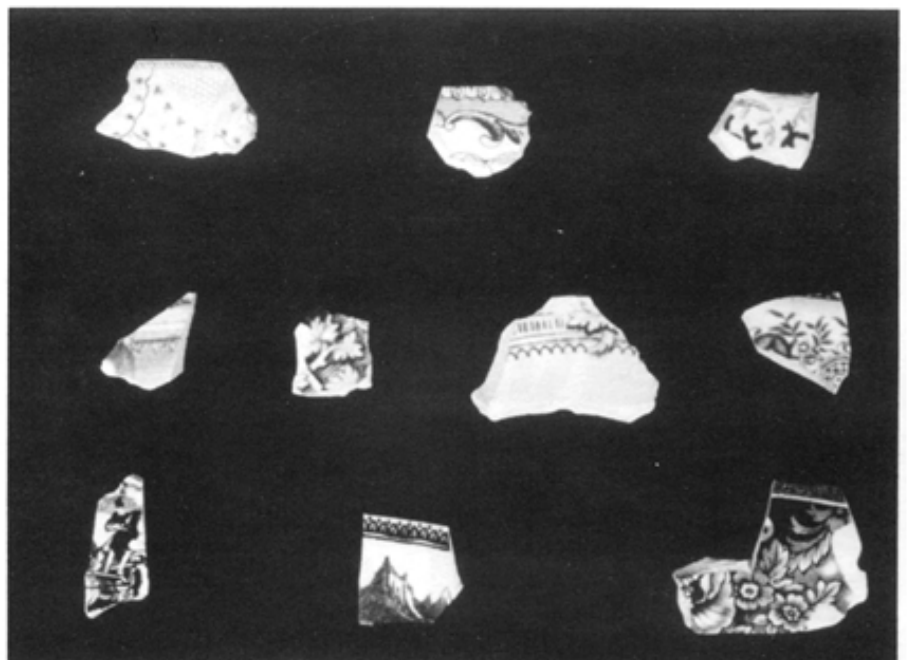
The findings led to the backhoe stripping of an area along Alameda Street, in the location of the proposed parking lot. The building foundation and several pits were documented. Four of the pits are believed to represent outhouses. Archaeologists removed the upper fill that will be disturbed during construction, collecting a variety of household objects dating to between 1892 and the park's creation, which occurred between 1904 and 1909. Among the items recovered were bottles, dishes, and children's toys, probably discarded by residents of a nearby house.

The findings further confirm what other recent excavations have shown—many areas in downtown Tucson contain remains from the City's early historic past, despite development.

AIT volunteers who participated in the Sunset Park project were: Connie Allen-Bacon, Valerie Conforti, Mary Cumming, Josh Edwards, Ken Fite, Beth Miksa, John Murray, Darla Pettit, Chris Ratliff, Jay Sander, Jon Shumaker, and Patty Whitley.



A rock house foundation and several outhouse pits now lie beneath a parking lot in front of City Hall.



Transfer-print ceramics traveled from England, across the Atlantic and around the bottom of South America on a ship, and by mule train to Tucson in the 1840s and 1850s.



A turn-of-the-century table setting was discarded into an out-house, perhaps when new dishes were purchased.

Introducing the Center's New Programs Manager

When Lisa Armstrong was a graduate student from the University of Pennsylvania, studying at the U of A's Grasshopper Field School, she never dreamed that Arizona would some day become more than a temporary home. But last summer, she was back here again, working as a field archaeologist for Desert Archaeology's excavation near I-10 and then beginning a new role in October as the Center's programs manager.



Lisa Armstrong

Before returning to Tucson, Lisa spent four years as Lab Director for the Thailand Archaeometallurgy Project. Her varied background also includes serving as Research Assistant for the Museum of Applied Sciences Center for Archaeology at the University of Pennsylvania; as a field archaeologist for the Lopburi Regional Archaeological Project in Central Thailand; and as an Intern for Public Programs at the Academy of National Sciences in Philadelphia. In addition, she worked for 12 years in the "business world" of life insurance and real estate.

Since October, Lisa has been busy enhancing the Center's current programs, as well as creating new ones, such as an internship program and a workshop series. She has developed a "Strategic Plan" for the Center and is very involved with the San Pedro Conservation Project. According to Lisa, the Center's focus will continue to be on research and education. She is excited about sharing the Center's resources with the public and the archaeological community. Lisa feels that the "collaboration between research archaeologists and nonarchaeologists is a great source of new ideas."

If you have questions about the Center for Desert Archaeology or ideas for new programs, Lisa is the person to call!

Glen Loftis, Clovis Hunter

by Lisa Armstrong, Center for Desert Archaeology

When we pulled into the Murray Springs site parking lot, Glen Loftis was waiting for us. On that morning in February, we had planned to meet Glen and tour some of the premier Clovis sites in the Southwest: Murray Springs, the Lehner Ranch, and Naco. We had heard that Glen, a committed avocational archaeologist, was thoroughly acquainted with these unique sites of the Upper San Pedro Basin. His research and preservation initiative, the "Paleo Patrol," is supported by Mrs. Agnese Lindley Haury and administered by the Center for Desert Archaeology. Glen was eager to show us the sites and walk through the surrounding arroyos that dramatically reveal late Pleistocene stratigraphy.

Glen's interests coincided with the curiosity of others in the group. That Saturday morning, our party brought together several different perspectives on the San Pedro Basin. Andrea Freeman, research archaeologist with the Center, specializes in the geoarchaeology of Southern Arizona's riparian environments; her two interns from the University of Arizona, Todd Schmitz and Josh Edwards, are observing and recording riverine stratigraphic sequences as an independent study project for second semester, and I am in the early stages of the San Pedro Archaeological Conservation Project (see Winter 1996 issue of *Archaeology in Tucson*). With Glen's extensive knowledge of the terrain gained from years of observation and survey, he naturally assumed the role of "guide."

Glen first became acquainted with the Sierra Vista area in 1978 when he was posted to Fort Huachuca. During his Army career as a microwave communications specialist, he was assigned to the fort for more than 10 years. When he came up for retirement two years ago, he decided to stay in Sierra Vista. Glen's aim was to continue his academic education, so he enrolled at Cochise County College.

Classes in archaeology taught by Dr. Amy Campbell captured Glen's attention, and soon his weekend routine changed from motorcycle racing to archaeological field trips, surveys, site stewardship, and excavation activities with the Cochise Chapter of the Arizona Archaeological Society. His ability to discern archaeological features during surface surveys and his "eye" for bison and mammoth bones washing out of paleosediments became well-known. Glen is committed to stewardship of archaeological resources and donates his time to community groups who enlist him for interpretive archaeological field trips. Murray Springs is almost a second home for him.

While on "Paleo Patrol," Glen monitors the Upper San Pedro's known sites, but he is also determined to keep surveying locales that might produce more Clovis material. His dedication is timely because it is increasingly difficult to survey in brushy arroyos and draws within the San Pedro National Riparian Area. Since cattle are no longer grazing these areas, underbrush is quickly limiting access and obscuring paleosedimentary profiles. However, Glen Loftis continues the hunt.

Center for Desert Archaeology
Archaeology in Tucson
3975 North Tucson Blvd. Tucson,
AZ 85716

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Dropped into an outhouse in downtown Tucson, this doll's head has painted blonde hair (see article on page 6).

Time to Renew?

If your address label indicates that your *Archaeology in Tucson* membership has expired, please renew promptly to remain eligible for all activities, newsletters, and discounts on T-shirts and Center for Desert Archaeology publications.

CIENEGA SURVEY

Last chance for the Cienega Survey this spring is Sunday, May 19. If you're interested in volunteering, or for more information, call Lisa Piper at 881-2244.

The Center for Desert Archaeology

The Center for Desert Archaeology is a nonprofit research and education organization that specializes in the study of archaeology and history of desert regions. Our primary research focus has been southern Arizona.

Archaeology in Tucson

is the Center for Desert Archaeology's membership program. For further information about the Center for Desert Archaeology or about the *Archaeology in Tucson* program, call us at 520-881-2244. For information on the *Archaeology in Tucson* newsletter specifically, please contact the editor, Homer Thiel.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Artifact photographs: Tom Kolaz, pages 2-3; Greg Berg, pages 6, 7, and 8. Other photographs: Henry Wallace, page 5; Fred Schock, page 7. Illustrations: Ron Beckwith, pages 2, 4, and 5; Jane Silva, pages 1 and 3. Map on page 6 by Geo-map, Inc.

Printed on Recycled Paper

Archaeology in Tucson Membership Application

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____

Center for Desert Archaeology
 300 E. University Blvd., Ste. 230
 Tucson, AZ 85705

Membership Category _____ d: \$ _____

Are you interested in volunteering on archaeology research projects? ___ Yes ___ No

Mail with payment to:
 CENTER FOR DESERT ARCHAEOLOGY
 3975 NORTH TUCSON BLVD.
 TUCSON, AZ 85716

7/94

Archaeology in Tucson Annual Membership Categories and Rates

Individual.....	\$10	Contributing.....	\$50
Family.....	\$15	Active.....	\$100
Supporting	\$25	Sponsor	\$200
Patron.....	\$500		