August 10, 2017 chapter meeting of NPSOT, Williamson County Chapter

Dr. Clark Wernecke, The Gault Site, an Update

There was a short announcement session prior to the program. President Walt Henderson reminded the group that the annual symposium will be held Nov. 2-3 in Huntsville. Watch the web site for the opening of registration. Kathy Galloway gave the treasurer’s report and read a thank you note from Selah, the Bamburger Ranch, for the $1000 gift. Walt noted a thank you from Bring Back the Monarchs to Texas for a similar gift. Vicky Husband announced there will be no field trip this month. We will continue surveying Garey Park in the fall. Randy Pensabene announced the Fall Plant Sale on 21-22 Oct. Also NLCP classes are scheduled for: Level 1 on Sep 2 and again on Sep 23 and Level 3 on Nov 11. Bob Kamper announced upcoming programs. Next month Bill Carr will talk about the undiscovered county, plants that should be here but haven’t yet been found. In Nov. Lynn and Jim Weber will speak on Nature Watch Big Bend.

Dr. Clark Wernecke updated us on the Gault Archaeological Site, an 80 acre site which is only 13 miles from Georgetown. In 1929 Henry Gault invited J.D. Pearce, an archaeologist to assess his farm for archaeological interest. Not until the 1980’s did anyone realize the amazing possibilities when David Olmstead dug up a stone that looked like bacon. The amazing thing about it was that it was known to come from the Panhandle of Texas. Questions arose about how it could have made its way to this land. Then the owner found the jaw of an adolescent mammoth surrounded by Clovis points and tools. It is one of only 15 mammoth kill sites in the U.S. Next the investigators found a gravel floor which was recognized as the base of a house, a very early house. The Gault Site has 60% of all the Clovis artifacts in the Americas. Now they have over two million artifacts to study and organize, so digging has stopped.

Then artifacts were found BELOW the Clovis level which date to 18,000 years ago. This is currently called the Gault Assemblage.

The Site has received the State Archaeological Landmark citation and is expecting the National citation.

There are two books in process that will rewrite the history of the peoples in the Americas based on the findings at this site.

Dr. Wernecke is looking for volunteers for many tasks on that 80 acres:

- Needs photographers to post good pictures of flora and fauna found there
- Needs plant survey, bird survey, other creatures also
- Needs help with managing the land regarding erosion control
- Needs help with control of invasives

Future Plans: Roadside exhibit open 24/7

- Renovation of archaeological trail with focus on plants that have been used by past cultures
- An interpretive center

Resources: www.gaultschool.org

Natural Gault

Bell County Museum—has an excellent permanent exhibit about the Gault Site

Submitted by Kathy Henderson