

Idaho State University Archaeological Fieldschool 2009

The 2009 Idaho State University Archaeological Fieldschool will be held at the Gault Site in south-central Texas, in cooperation with the Texas Archaeological Research Lab, University of Texas.

Idaho State University initially worked on the Gault site, summer of 2007, at the invitation of Dr. Michael Collins, TARL. We tested site integrity in the area of a small spring heading the creek, finding that there were intact Clovis layers below disturbed Archaic midden.



<http://www.texasbeyonhistory.net/gault/index.html>

In 2009 we return to excavate Pre-Clovis levels at the Gault site dated to almost 18,000 years ago.

The Gault site is unique in North America in preserving a detailed record of Clovis reduction strategies. Clovis people camped along the stream routinely to use the outcrops of Edwards Plateau flint.

The Gault site also offers the extreme rarity of intact cultural deposits stratigraphically below Clovis. We will be working with Gault Project staff to systematically expose and document these Pre-Clovis components.

Other researchers working on the Gault site this summer include Dr. Michael Waters, Director of the Center for First Americans, Texas A&M University, Dr. Bruce Bradley, Exeter University, Dr. James Adovasio, Mercyhurst College, and Dr. Dennis Stanford, the Smithsonian Institution. Idaho State University is privileged to be working alongside such distinguished colleagues.

The Gault site, midway between Georgetown and Ft. Hood in central Texas, has a long history of archeological investigation as well as uncontrolled artifact digging. Located in a small wooded valley with a spring-fed creek and an unlimited supply of excellent flint, the site was occupied intensively during all major periods of the prehistoric era. James E. Pearce, the first professional archeologist in Texas, learned of the Gault Farm site and excavated there in 1929-1930. Over the next 60 years, artifact collectors churned up the upper deposits over almost the entire site, but stopped digging when the dark rich midden soil played out. In 1990, an artifact collector dug deeper and found Clovis artifacts along with several unusual incised stones, something never before found with Clovis materials. Learning of the find, Drs. Thomas R. Hester and Michael B. Collins of the Texas Archeological Research., visited the site. In work from 1998-2002, that began with the excavation of a mammoth mandible and associated Clovis artifacts, the Gault Project recovered more than one million artifacts from the site. Currently the Gault staff is analyzing the recovered data and beginning the production of a monograph slated for publication in 2009.

Archaeologists are focusing their efforts on excavating areas below the Clovis layer and are attempting to determine if Gault will yield evidence of people who lived in Central Texas prior to 13,500 years ago. Deep tests conducted at the site have repeatedly turned up evidence of pre-Clovis occupation.



Clovis point

Clovis blade core



Large biface

Distinctive Clovis assemblage markers
http://www.utexas.edu/research/tarl/research/gault_artifacts.php



<http://www.texasbeyonhistory.net/gault/clovis.html>

The Gault site occupies the small creek valley that crosses from left to right. The brown slash near the center of the picture is a stratigraphic trench dug through the heavily looted part of the site. Photo by Frank Sloan.
<http://www.texasbeyonhistory.net/gault/clovis.html>



The 2009 ISU Fieldschool will accept applications from interested undergraduate and graduate students until April 15. We will enroll 18 students this summer. All students will enroll in Anth 486 for 6 credits or Anth 483 for 3 credits. Preference will be given to students enrolling for the full six credits but others will be considered. Students are responsible for their own transportation to Austin, where they will be picked up by fieldschool staff and transported to the field camp north of Austin.

Fieldschool will run from June 1 -30, 2009. We will be housed at the Gault site, with showers, cooking facilities, and a laboratory building. For more information contact E.S. Lohse, Fieldschool Director, at Lohserne@isu.edu, or consult the Anthropology Department website at <http://www.isu.edu/departments/anthro/fieldschool>. SEE YOU THERE!