

# ARCHAEOLOGY IN TUCSON

Vol. 1, No.1

Newsletter of the Institute for American Research

Fall 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 commitment to the principle 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.

### Meetings

*Archaeology in Tucson* will hold regular Spring and Fall meetings for members and the interested public. These meetings will focus on a current research project in the Tucson Basin. The Fall Meeting will be Wednesday, October 1 at 7:30 P.M. in the public meeting room of the Foothills Mall. The topic is "The Valencia Site: A Hohokam Ballcourt Village in Tucson." The Spring Meeting will coincide with Arizona Archaeology Week, usually the first week of April.

### Field Trips

Each year *Archaeology in Tucson* will offer at least one field trip to sites in and around the Tucson Basin. On January 18, 1997, we will visit the rock art sites of the Picacho Mountains. There is no charge for this field trip which is open to members only.

### The Newsletter

The *Archaeology in Tucson* newsletter is issued quarterly. It will keep you informed about current research, education, and preservation activities of the Institute for American Research and *Archaeology in Tucson*. In addition, there is coverage of local excavations, tours, and lectures that you will want to attend. A calendar of upcoming events will help you plan your exploration of Tucson's prehistoric past.

### Other Activities and Benefits

*Archaeology in Tucson* is a new program, so it is anticipated that it will develop and change as the interests of its membership become better defined. One of our first goals is to offer training sessions in archaeological survey to interested members. Once we have built up a group of well trained, enthusiastic volunteers, we will begin a program of active archaeological survey around Tucson.

As a benefit of membership, you will receive a 10 percent discount on all publications by *Archaeology in Tucson* and the Institute for American Research. In addition, admission to all lectures and tours sponsored by *Archaeology in Tucson* is free to members.

### Become a Member

Persons interested in the prehistory of Tucson and the surrounding area are encouraged to join *Archaeology in Tucson*. Whether you are a novice or a professional, *Archaeology in Tucson* will be of interest to you and needs your support.

### Membership Dues

Roughly eight dollars of your dues cover the costs of the newsletter and membership activities. The remainder goes for direct support of special local archaeology or educational programs undertaken by *Archaeology in Tucson*. We urge you to look us over carefully, and then select the highest membership category you feel comfortable with.



*Institute Charter Members Tour the Romero Ruin Ballcourt. May 1986.*

### CURRENT AIT PROJECTS

*Archaeology in Tucson* has two active research projects. The first is focused on the Valencia Site on Tucson's south side. The second includes the sites in and around Catalina State Park north of Tucson. Both projects are in initial stages of documenting the archaeological remains present and formulating plans for long-term research, preservation, and interpretation.

The Valencia Site is a large Hohokam ballcourt village that was initially settled around 800 D.C. and was occupied continuously until A.D. 1200. The City of Tucson and the Arizona State Land Department have funded the mapping, intensive collection of surface artifacts, and limited testing of the site boundary. *Archaeology in Tucson* will use this information to prepare a plan for developing this site into an interpretive park as called for in the City of Tucson's Santa Cruz Riverpark Master Plan.

A number of large sites are known in and around Catalina State Park, and the Institute for American Research has received a \$10,000 matching grant from the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office to conduct survey and to nominate this area to the National Register of Historic Places. *Archaeology in Tucson* has made additional grant applications to match the \$10,000, and fieldwork is anticipated to begin in early 1987.



## THE INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN RESEARCH

The Institute for American Research is an independent, public benefit, nonprofit organization. Incorporated in the state of California in 1968, the Institute is the oldest organization of its kind in the western United States. Corporate headquarters are in Santa Barbara, California.

### The Arizona Division

The Arizona Division was formed in January 1982 and is based in Tucson. The rich prehistoric heritage of the Tucson Basin is being actively explored by the Institute through archaeological surveys and excavations. The resulting depth of local experience means that each project builds on many previous ones. Thereby our understanding of Tucson's rich prehistoric past grows steadily, even on small projects. The results of these studies are presented in scientific publications as well as tours, exhibits, and popular reports.

A varied funding mix supports the Institute's archaeological studies. Much of this work is carried out under contracts with government agencies and private corporations that are complying with the laws that protect prehistoric and historic sites. Additional funding comes from research grants, donations, and a membership program.



## MAJOR INSTITUTE PROJECTS

### Excavation

- (1)\* Nolic. Tohono O'odham (Papago) households, A.D. 1880-1930.
- (2)\* Valencia Site. Archaic-Hohokam periods, 800 D.C.-A.D. 1150.
- (3)\* La Paloma Site. Archaic Indian camp, 5000 B.C.-A.D. 400.
- (4)\* West Branch Site. Hohokam Indian village, A.D. 800-1150
- (5) Tanque Verde Wash Site. Hohokam Indian village, A.D. 1000-1100,
- (6) Cienega Site. Hohokam Indian farmstead, A.D. 1000-1100.

### Survey

- (7)\* Southern Tucson Basin. 6400 acres.
- (8) Papago Water Supply. 21,000 acres.
- (9) Rancho Vistoso. 7500 acres.

### Rock Art Study

- (10)\* Petroglyphs of the Picacho Mountains. Over 5000 glyphs recorded.

\* Reports are now available for starred projects. Others available soon.

### Exhibits

- (11) Fairfield Coronado Ridge. Reconstructed pithouse. Artifacts and interpretation of Tanque Verde Wash Site. Open daily at 10150 East Speedway. For information call 721-8177.
- (12) Foothills Mall. Paleoindian exhibit with mammoth bones, artifacts of Early Man. Opens late 1986.

## ARTIFACT PROFILE

This half-bowl is all that pothunters left behind of a Rillito Red-on-brown bowl when they dug into a Hohokam cremation offering at the Valencia Site. Note the small holes on both the left and right sides of this vessel. They represent impacts from a thin metal probe used by some of the highly proficient pothunters that are actively destroying portions of the Valencia Site. Because the probe impacts are on the exterior of the bowl, we suspect that it was originally inverted over a cremation urn. This bowl was found as a pile of broken sherds and was not even near its original context.



Traditionally the Rillito phase of the Tucson Basin Hohokam is dated to A.D. 700-900, but new information about the Hohokam chronology suggests that this phase is both shorter than 200 years and somewhat later. The Valencia Site was flourishing during the Rillito phase to judge from the large amount of Rillito Red-on-brown recovered during the Institute's recent surface collections from that site.

This illustration was prepared by Barbara Malczewski, whose considerable drafting skills are evident. Our thanks to her for this contribution to the newsletter.



## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXHIBITS

The Institute is interested in reaching as many people as possible who are interested in local archaeology. One very successful method to meet this goal is through archaeological site tours and another is with archaeological exhibits.

Our largest exhibit, to date, is located in the first floor of a model home at Fairfield's Coronado Ridge at 10150 E. Speedway. Fairfield contracted the Institute to prepare an exhibit on the findings from our excavations at the Tanque Verde Wash Site. The site was located on the property which now houses Fairfield's Coronado Ridge Townhome development. The exhibit contains a reconstruction of a Hohokam pithouse, an artifact case, and several interpretive panels that include photographs and drawings of the excavation. The exhibit is open daily and everyone is invited to visit.

We have also produced exhibits on many Institute excavations and surveys. They have been displayed at Tucson City Hall, Pima County Department of Transportation, San Xavier Tribal Council Hall, Schuk Toak District Council Hall, El Con Mall, and the Arizona State Capitol Museum.

Currently we are serving as consultants to Foothills Mall Venture, the new owners of the Foothills Mall. They are developing a museum that will be part of the mall, and we are working with the Larson Company on designing and installing a permanent exhibit on Early Man. The exhibit will be a full-scale depiction of a Paleoindian mammoth kill site and will have replicas of ancient artifacts. The museum is scheduled to open around Thanksgiving time.

## ARCAEOLOGICAL SITE PROFILE: THE VALENCIA SITE

The Valencia Site is located near Valencia Road and the Santa Cruz River on Tucson's south side. The Hohokam lived at the Valencia Site from about A.D. 400 to 1200. However, the origins of the settlement date from roughly 800 B.C. when Archaic period hunters and gatherers began cultivating corn along the Santa Cruz River. These early inhabitants built small, circular pithouses, and they probably lived at the site only during the farming season.

By A.D. 400-600 residence at the Valencia Site was probably becoming more permanent. People began making pottery and their pithouses were somewhat larger. This set of material traits, particularly pottery, allows archaeologists to identify these people as the Hohokam.

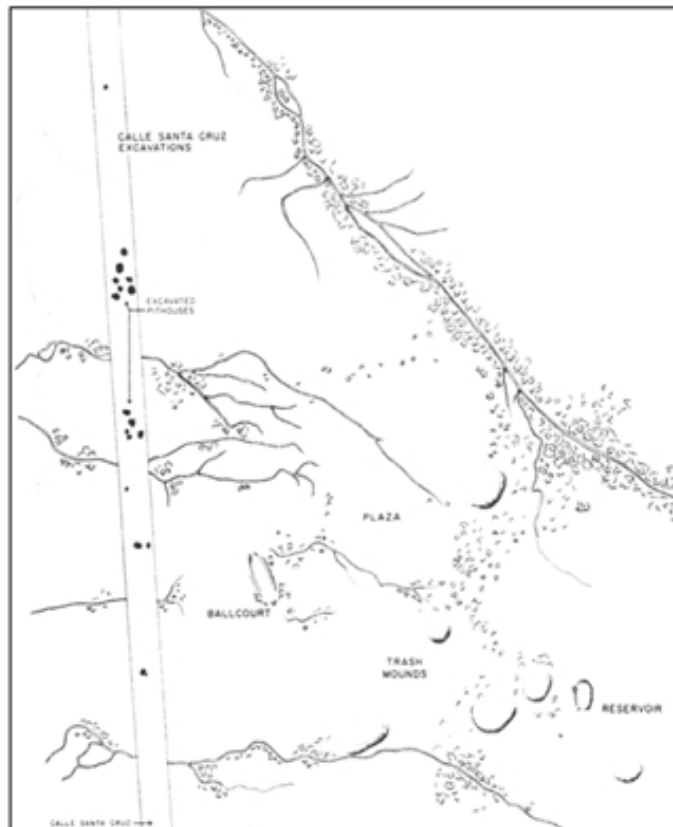
The Hohokam village grew in size over time. By A.D. 800 The village layout was quite formal. There was apparently a central uninhabited area that served as a public plaza. Small groups of pithouses were arranged around this plaza, and as people continued to discard their food scraps and broken pottery just off the edge of the site, trash mounds began to accumulate.

At the western margin of the site a ballcourt was constructed. Basketload after basketload of earth was removed from an area some 60 yards long and 25 yards wide. This earth was piled to form embankments on the eastern and western sides of the excavated area. Village residents and visitors from nearby villages probably gathered atop these embankments to watch the playing of a ball game, complete with a rubber ball. The ballgame provided a reason for people of different villages to get together to exchange goods, to arrange marriages, and probably to perform ritual activities.

The village residents obtained most of their subsistence needs from the floodplain of the nearby Santa Cruz River. Crops of corn, beans, and squash were cultivated and the sweet pods produced by the abundant mesquite trees were harvested every year. The Santa Cruz River probably flowed year-round. Meat was not abundant in the diet, though jackrabbits and cottontails were captured from the fields when possible. Saguaro fruit and cholla buds were gathered during special seasonal trips to the nearby mountain foothills.

Around A.D. 1000 there were changes in the organization of the village. Geological information indicates that the Santa Cruz River may have experienced severe flooding that was followed by downcutting of the river channel. Many of the village inhabitants appear to have moved as small groups to the area immediately to the north. The Valencia Site extended for over a mile along the Santa Cruz River during the period A.D. 1000 to 1100.

After A.D. 1100 the population of the Valencia Site began to decrease rapidly. By A.D. 1150 the old village-center was completely abandoned, though some of the northern extensions of the site may have been occupied on a seasonal basis until A.D. 1200 or so. Why this area that had been so ideal for living and growing crops for some 2000 years was abandoned is still not understood. Major social changes were occurring throughout the southwest at this time, and local environmental conditions may have been a factor in the changes at the Valencia Site. At present a full explanation for the local changes has still not been achieved. It is part of the mystery that keeps archaeologists sifting through the centuries-old dirt.



*This map of the Valencia Site shows the various features that archaeologists from the Institute have mapped and excavated over the last three years.*



INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN RESEARCH

**T-SHIRTS**

T-shirts with a beautiful, stylized Hohokam pottery jar design can be purchased from the Institute. The tan or cream colored shirts are made of 100% cotton and have a rust colored design (shown above). These shirts make wonderful gifts and help support and promote *Archaeology in Tucson*. They cost \$8.00 per shirt and are available in S, M, L, and XL. Please use the order blank on the membership form.



**DEVELOPMENT AND TUCSON'S  
ARCHAEOLOGY**

As we are all well aware, population growth and construction of many new business and residential projects are rapidly transforming Tucson. Less visible is the extent to which Tucson's archaeology is being affected by this development. We are indeed fortunate that federal, state, and local laws and regulations frequently serve to preserve the information from prehistoric sites before development takes place. For example, all of the recent largescale excavations in the Tucson Basin have had some sort of a legal mandate.

Despite this positive side of things, much is still being overlooked, and *Archaeology in Tucson* hopes to help address some of these neglected areas. First, the active research program that will be a key element of *Archaeology in Tucson* will focus on sites, areas, or research topics that simply are not being addressed by research in the framework of "contract archaeology." Of particular interest, for example, are the Late Classic period and the Protohistoric period, times for which we currently have very little information. Furthermore, we will target unsurveyed and undeveloped areas of high site potential in the vicinity of Tucson as priority areas for volunteer survey programs.

The second area we hope to focus on is public awareness and involvement. Vandalism is a significant problem in the Tucson Basin. A combination of public education and the organization of volunteers to monitor key sites can help reduce vandalism to archaeological sites.

To summarize, development is clearly shaping the kind of research that is done on the archaeology of Tucson. It results in the destruction of some sites, the excavation of others, and occasionally in site preservation. But it is *Archaeology in Tucson's* goal to give the archaeologist more control of the research process and to offset some of the more severe effects of development that otherwise cannot be addressed.

**JOIN ARCHAEOLOGY IN TUCSON**

Persons interested in the prehistory of Tucson and the surrounding area are encouraged to join *Archaeology in Tucson*. Become an active supporter of efforts by the Institute for American Research to explore and interpret the prehistory of the region, and enjoy a variety of membership benefits.

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES**

**INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES**

Individual	\$10
Family	\$15
Supporting	\$25
Sustaining	\$100
Patron	\$500

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zipcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**CORPORATIONS**

Active	
Supporting	\$500

Enclosed please find:

\$\_\_\_\_\_ *Archaeology in Tucson* Annual Membership

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Additional Tax Deductible Donation

ARCHAEOLOGY IN TUCSON \$\_\_\_\_\_ For \_\_\_\_\_ T-shirts at \$9.00 Each  
 245 South Plumer, Suite 14 \_\_\_\_\_ Small \_\_\_\_\_ Medium \_\_\_\_\_ Large \_\_\_\_\_ X-Large \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tucson, Arizona 85719

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed

(Make Checks to: Institute for American Research)

**THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CALENDAR**

- October 1 *Archaeology in Tucson* Fall Meeting. Topic: "The Valencia Site: A Hohokam Ballcourt Village in Tucson." Time: 7:30 PM. Place: Foothills Mall Public Meeting Room. Free.
- October 16-18 Mogollon Conference. To be held at the Arizona Heritage Center, 949 East Second Street. Small registration fee.
- November 14-15 Tucson Basin Conference. To be held at the Hotel Americana de Tucson, 1601 North Miracle Mile. Small registration fee.
- January 18, 1987 *Archaeology in Tucson's* Winter Tour. A day long visit to the rock art sites of the Picacho Mountains, northwest of Tucson. For members only. Free.
- January 30-31 1987 Hohokam Conference. Arizona State University, Tempe. Registration fee.

For more information call the Institute for American Research: 622-6663.

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