

# State

## Archaeologists race time to protect Texas history

United Press International  
DALLAS — Archaeologists are working with time — and against it — in a 50,000-acre area south of Dallas, which they believe holds historic evidence from a time period between 8,000 B.C. and 1930 A.D.

An archaeological team from Southern Methodist University is busy investigating prehistoric and historic remains in the area that will be overflowed with water in eight years, due to construction of the Richland Chambers dam and reservoir in Navarro and Freestone counties southeast of Dallas. "Archaeological resources are fragile and non-renewable," said Dr. Mark Raab, who heads the Archaeology Research Program of the SMU Anthropology Department.

"There is danger in destroying

evidence of the past in the process of new developments," he said. "As conservation archaeologists, we are concerned with preserving our archaeological heritage for future generations."

"In the Richland Creek area we are attempting to record remnants of prehistory and early history, along with evidence of a recent rural culture that is in danger of disappearing without documentation." During the recently completed survey phase of the project, Raab and his 42-member team examined the area and put together an inventory of more than 500 prehistoric and historic sites spanning nearly 10,000 years.

He said some of the major prehistoric discoveries include two Wylie focus pits dating between 900 and 1500 A.D.

The pits, named for the North

Texas town near which they were first found in the 1950s, were dug by prehistoric Indians with simple hand tools and contain remains of human bones and such domestic refuse as seeds and nuts. Archaeologists think the pits, 12 to 14 feet deep at the center and up to 100 feet in diameter, may have been first used as burial sites and later for domestic purposes.

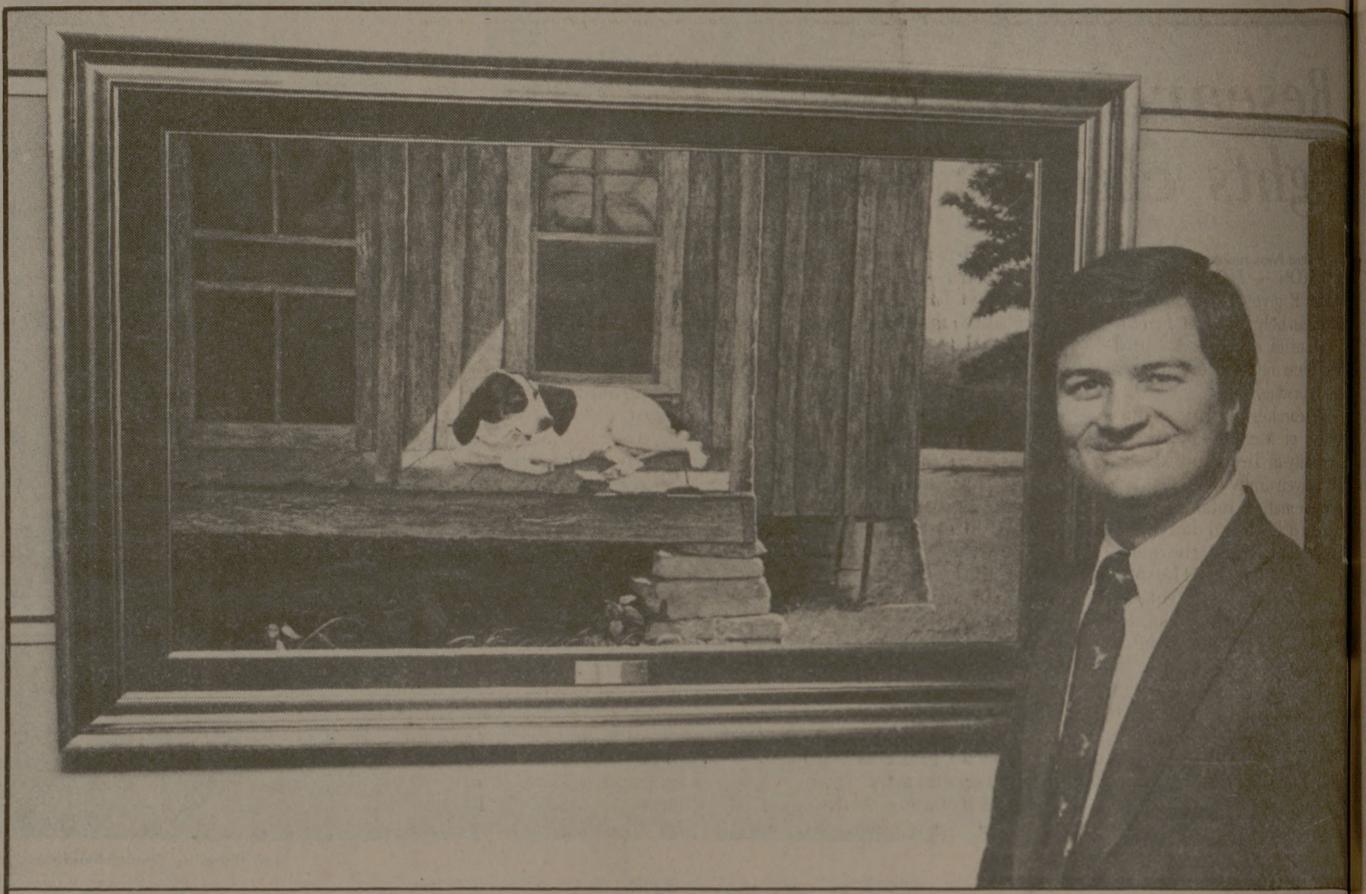
"Wylie focus pits have long fascinated archaeologists in Texas but their use has remained a mystery," he said. "We hope to unravel that mystery in our study."

Raab said his team also plans to focus on the area's changing climate during the past 10,000 years. He said preliminary data indicates the area was much more cool, moist and heavily forested about 4,000 years ago. There is also evidence, he said, in the form of recovered pollen and other data, that there were great changes in climate — including a tremendous drought between 1000 and 1300 A.D.

The conservation archaeologist said the researchers will also focus on historic sites showing how life in the area changed during the past 500 years, with particular emphasis on the agriculture-based culture of the past 100 years.

"The area developed a very distinctive rural culture, based on tenant farming," Raab said. "Despite changes in the country as a whole, that culture remained relatively unchanged from 1860 to World War II. We can paint an interesting picture of the lives of the people who lived there as reflected in their material remains."

"Formal historical records tend to reflect the lives of the wealthy and well-known rather than the common people."

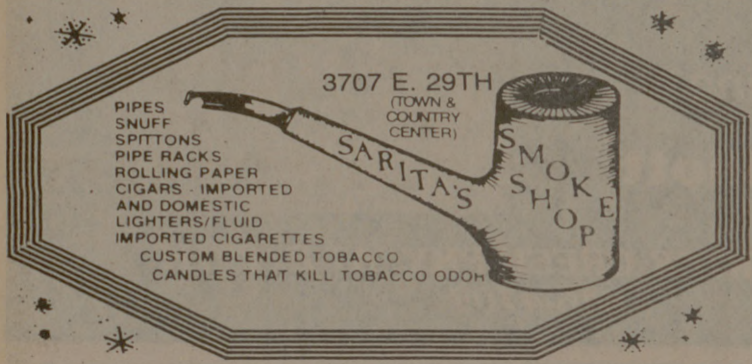


### Texas State Artist

James Harvey Johnson displays his painting, "Waitin' for Willard," in the Memorial Student Center. Johnson, a graduate of the Texas A&M Veterinary School, was named

Texas State Artist of the Year for 1982-83. He donated his painting to the Permanent MSC Collection during a ceremony last night.

Staff photo by Dave...



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## King faces trial for murders

United Press International  
RUSK — Alvin Lee King III, charged with killing five people during a Sunday morning shooting rampage at a Daingerfield church, has been found competent to stand trial.

A psychiatric evaluation team at Rusk State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, where King has been held since shortly after the June 1980 shootings, has judged King competent to stand trial.

Morris County Sheriff Joe Skipper said King, who shot himself in the head minutes after the church shootings, would be transferred to the Northeast Texas county jail within a few days.

King, a former high school math teacher, has been at Rusk undergoing psychiatric testing for 17 months. Although he physical-

ly recovered from his head wound, he had repeatedly been judged incompetent to stand trial until this latest ruling.

The ruling, which found King mentally competent to stand trial, does not prohibit using a defense of temporary insanity at the time of the shooting.

King's defense lawyer, Percy Foreman, has two weeks to object to the psychiatric evaluation, State District Judge B.D. Moye said. An objection by Foreman would lead to a competency hearing. If no objection is made, a trial

date could be set.

"We've got 15 days to set our mind, and we will first see the reports with our own attorneys and will be governed by their decision as to whether we further contest," Foreman said Thursday.

Foreman said if King sticks by their decision, it would be nothing to do with the hearing on the murder case.

Foreman said if there is conflicting evidence, he would appeal later.

## 26-year-old disease victim is example to youngsters

United Press International  
MILFORD, Conn. — Meg Casey says her family and their attitude helped her combat a rare genetic disease, and now she'd like to provide some encouragement to three young victims of the same illness.

Casey, who has reached the unusual age of 26 for a victim of progeria, said she hoped she could be a positive example to the children who also suffer from the illness characterized by premature aging.

The Milford artist said she

hoped to meet with Fransie Geringer, 8, of South Africa, and Mickey Hayes, 9, of Hallsville, Texas, who are visiting Disneyland in California and getting to know one another.

The Disneyland trip was arranged to allow the two boys to meet someone in the same situation. Alicia Gowans, an 11-year-old from San Jose, Calif., who is also a victim, joined the boys after reading about their meeting.

Casey said she could identify with the children because, like

them, she had never met anyone else with the disease. She wanted them to know she was years old and still living.

"We are a family," she said. "We all have the same characteristics. I can't promise that, but I think by going and seeing them in the field give them hope."

Casey, one of two girls born with the disease, said she had helped her combat the disease that includes balding and other characteristics of aging. "I want to be a child," she said.



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