UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
ORAL HISTORY OF HOUSTON PROJECT

Jon Lohse

Interviewed by: Reed Amadon
Date:
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Location: Center for Archeological Studies at Texas State University

RA: My name is Reed Amadon and I'm here to interview Jon Lohse and a Ph.D. who is I believe you are the head of the Center for Archeological Studies here.

JH: That's right.

RA: At Texas State University and I think that Dr. Lohse's background is interesting in terms of looking at the work you have done. The work you have done as I understand it is household archeological which I thought was very interesting and lithics. Is there another area?

JH: I have a few interests and lithics studies are one of those in some context or applications, household archeology is one of those I am interested in prehistoric or pre Hispanic patterns of ritual behavior and religious practice. I have recently become more interested in processes of learning in transition of important skill sets for it is sort of a broad smear.

RA: Well good and I really appreciate you being a part of this project. We are here right now at Southwest Texas right now in his office and I think the two areas of interests, one has been working with the Maya and one working with the sites here in Texas with how do you say it?

JH: Zatopec…

RA: Zatopec site and also the Gault site.

JH: Yeah that's right.

RA: Those are two very interesting sites in relationship to our interest in Texas archeology. If we could I really appreciate you seeing me for this and let me go through some of the initial things. First of all what is your present title?

JH: My title is Director of the Center for Archeological Studies.

RA: Okay excellent. I understand that this college has lots of they do a lot of archeology out of this school. But is all out of this office now?

JH: It is not all out of this office. The Center is just that there are several centers across campus and different departments and some are located in different colleges but are not in a department and we have people on the faculty in the anthropology department who also do archeological research, not part of the center.

RA: But you guys do a lot of focus work?

JH: We do a lot of focus work.

RA: Field work?

JH: In the area, a lot of field work a lot of lab work.

RA: What was it that got you first interested in archeology?

JH: My first exposures to archeology came as maybe a 3 or 4 year old kid. My mom was doing graduate work at Rice University and took my brother and me to Mexico with her for the summer over three or four years and that early exposure helped me to be aware of, though not understand, how broad and diverse the world was and it was a much bigger place than we saw just hanging out in our neighborhood.

RA: Was she working with Maya?

JH: She was working in the Wahaka (3.16) area so in classic times that would have been Zepotec actually.

RA: Okay that's good. What was your journey like to get, what kind of did you go through to get to this position you are in now? What was your professional track?

JH: I think it could be described as a meandering sort of rambling journey. I did my dissertation in the Maya area and did settlement pattern studies and household archeology.

RA: What is it?

JH: Settlement pattern studies, it is just mapping out where people have lived or done activities and left the remains on the landscape.

RA: _____ (3.59) villages?

JH: Yeah exactly, sort of where their houses are, where their workshops are, where their fields are. For the longest time my focus was and has been in Maya archeology, classic period Maya with an interest in, a particular interest in non-elite members of society, commoners we call them. At the same time through graduate school as a way to pay the bills I did a lot of cultural resource management, CRM we call it. These are archeological projects that are required by state or federal law and project sponsors would include public municipalities, school districts, cities, Texas State University for example. So doing CRM during my graduate school in Austin sort of helped develop what you would call it a parallel track I guess of experience that has been important in helping me remain employed I suppose through the years. So how I got to where I am now I think being involved in what we may call applied archeology at CRM is what most people call

it but in an academic setting or a university context is kind of I would say here in Texas is somewhat an unusual combination.

RA: I met people from DOT or otherwise that were archeologists that work for them and so it is unusual.

JH: A lot of archeologist at state agencies like the DOT, many of them, not all of them, would like I think one day or have wanted for a long time to kind of get back into academia where you could just sort of relax and think about things more, rather than work with hairy deadlines and monetary issues.

RA: So you have had both. You have been able to hustle and actually have time to think?

JH: Yeah exactly. This job is actually in a lot of ways either the best or the worst of both worlds. Because in an academic setting the projects that we take on, we have the ability or take the opportunity to think about anthropological problems in kind of an applied archeology context.

RA: Very interesting. What was your education like?

JH: I went to college in San Antonio at a Liberal Arts college Trinity University. I came from Spring Branch Independent School District in Houston, just kind of a middle of the road public school system. I went to Trinity and got out in four years with a double major in Anthropology and Religion.

RA: How interesting, very interesting.

JH: They developed the anthropology major while I was there so I think while they were building that program I took a lot of religion sort of as survey courses as much for the exposure to the different cultural practices as anything else. From there I went

straight to graduate school because I think with a B.A. in anthropology and religion I had no practical skills, no job prospects or anything like that.

RA: I know that one.

JH: So it was sort of the straight through indirect.

RA: What was your Ph.D.?

JH: My doctorate was I did a settlement pattern study and some household excavation in a site, a Maya site in northwestern Belize called _____. (7.25)

RA: Oh okay. Belize is a lot where this center does work right?

JH: This center, let me think, has not worked in Belize per se but there is a guy on the faculty of the Department of Anthropology that works in Belize, has worked in Belize every year for a long time, he may be there right now. I have worked in Belize but before I came to the Center.

RA: Okay well that is interesting. What are your experiences in the field, what are some of your experiences that you have had? What kind of things have you done?

JH: My experiences in the field, I guess that depends on a lot on the kinds of projects that we have done here at the Center and what opportunities I have had for my own, other kinds of research activities. Right now going on we have a project for some land owners in Maynard County that involve documenting some sites on their property that they are interesting in knowing more about.

RA: Where is Maynard County?

JH: Maynard County is about 3 ½ hours west, northwest of here.

RA: What kind of sites are there?

JH: These are all prehistoric hunter, gather sites. These are folks that have been living on the landscape before and for a little while overlapping with the Spanish and then Anglo settlers in the region.

RA: Oh there was overlap?

JH: There was overlap.

RA: Were they _____ (8.62) or what?

JH: In that area they were Apache, I think the _____ (8.58) didn't get that far up in that direction but Apache, Comanche.

RA: Okay and how many say 300 years old do you think?

JH: Let me think for a minute the year 2000, 300 years ago more or less there was a Spanish mission in the area and so some of these sites would have been 200 years old to about 12,000 years old.

RA: Excellent.

JH: Yeah that's a long time.

RA: What about other sites?

JH: At the Center we are kind of fortunate that most of our work takes place here in and around San Marcos so my field opportunities for field work really don't take me far away.

RA: There is a lot here.

JH: There is a lot here. There have been folks here for at least 12,000 years. I think the springs that are right here in town have been a natural attraction for folks forever.

RA: Did they find a really, really old site here?

JH: There are remains of people here, particularly around Spring Lake that date back to the end of the ice age. People continuously occupied this place until right now.

RA: Like some of the students?

JH: Like some of the students.

RA: What are some of the other sites? You are working, just sort of give me the breadth of your kind of a sum of the different things you have done.

JH: I have a couple of sort of ongoing areas of interest and I remain interested and one of those is Central America. I remain interested in Central America. I don't, I'm not as active these days with Maya archeological, working at classic sites like _____ (10.42) and _____ or something. Right now I am interested in exploring we would call them pre ceramic people in that area and archaic folks, Paleo-Indians hunter gathers.

RA: Pre Maya as we know it.

JH: Yeah exactly.

RA: Were they, as far as you know, were they the same people that became Maya?

JH: This is to me a really important question and I think that yes is the answer. Our problem is that before written records we don't really have as much ability to make these direct historical connections between Mayan people today and Maya peoples of a thousand years ago. So we kind of rely on archeological reconstructions. That allows us to kind of push these sort of lines of continuity back a little bit further, a little bit further. But when we get to a certain point that is around 900 or 1000 B.C. we really have very, very little archaic information to go on. So we have very little material evidence to help us understand continuities from what archeologists would call a Maya to _____. (11.57)

RA: You know there have been people there; they say they have had people there maybe 10,000 years.

JH: Yeah right.

RA: But you don't know if they are the same people that evolved into the Maya?

JH: We don't know if they are the same people that evolved into the Maya. I have just finished a paper that explores this issue and kind of argues for cultural continuity from archaic periods into the "Maya period" that is in quotes. I think one of our problems is that archeologists use the term Maya to refer to these pre historic peoples and the term glosses over so much variation that we don't really, I think we don't…it's almost kind of a reconstructed past rather than an honest historical.

RA: I understand in the _____ (12.47) they talked about they in the museum talked about people being there quite a long time ago but also that they could probably go back 2,500 years as Maya in that area which I thought was pretty interesting.

JH: If we start today and say the year 2000 just to make the math easier, 2,500 years ago would be 1,500 B.C., 500 B.C.

RA: 500 B.C.

JH: I beg your pardon. At _____ (13.13) I think some of the earliest dates are closer to 700 or 800 B.C. and other sites in that region also have a lot of 700 or 800 B.C. In the northern Yucatan where _____ is located they have very, very little pre ceramic information. There are some new sites that have been explored, discovered and are being explored now in underwater stenotas (13.38), some of these cave systems and they have found human remains and dated those human remains to 5,000, 8,000, 11,000 years ago.

RA: I have not heard about that.

JH: So this is all kind of new information but what I think is really important because it will hopefully help us kind of push these lines of continuity if that is the appropriate term.

RA: That is really interesting. I had no idea it dated back that far. Well you know the calendar goes back quite a ways.

JL: The calendar goes back quite a ways.

RA: I assume they wouldn't just create a calendar to go all the way back there for the fun of it.

JH: Yeah exactly. So…

RA: I was down there studying, following the remnants of their religion down there it has been fascinating and we'll talk about that a little later. But I think that the Mayan culture is very resilient. As you have gone through the process of becoming known in your field how has your thinking about the field changed? What are some of the things that have happened as you have been coming through which is about everything?

JH: Yeah my thinking about the field I think changes all the time. Archeology, this may not be the answer to your question so get me back on track if I get too far away.

RA: I will but every answer is a good answer.

JH: I think a lot of us are attracted to archeology because of the sense of adventure and travel. I think it is pretty easy to see that that is kind of how I got drawn in as well. For a lot of us there is an attraction that comes from studying the exotic or the foreign or the unfamiliar. When you go back in time it is like you can not just travel geographically

around the world but time travel into the past as well so that experience is sort of magnified…

RA: Wonderful definition.

JH: Along the way it is easy for us to kind of lose track I think of what is going on here today, some of the issues that define our society and our own contemporary social interactions. I know that archeology is defined as the study of people in the past. I think it is important to not forget or to be ever mindful of some of the issues that we have today. With the Maya for example, these are contemporary populations that are struggling to adapt or have adapted pretty well in contemporary nation states, societies and situations that are really different from what their ancestors faced. Understanding Maya peoples as a historical population that has been in place for not just hundreds of years and not just 1,500 or 2,500 years but thousands of years, I think in some cases can help them with identity issues with achieving or maintaining a voice in contemporary dialogue and discourse. It can help, I think, resolve or better define or clarify rights of access to heritable lands and resources and stuff.

RA: Huge impact.

JH: Huge impact. And that is just for the Maya. We have, we might be challenged to think about how in central Texas, we can understand pre historic hunter gatherers in a way that is relevant today. But my thinking about archeology is that at least occasionally there are opportunities to use what we do to shed light on issues that are problematic today, either for ourselves personally, or for other groups of society.

RA: When you study Maya and this is sort of, you know I am at my 30th book and being involved with them for years, I am beginning to think that they are not so different

than we were; that their culture was not so… we focus on the negative. But I am kind of coming to a point of wondering where there are not some real commonalities between. I believe there is but Maya looks so strange with their cosmos and their mythology and yet I am beginning to think that if you look at like _____ (17.58) work and some of the stuff where he is talking about how the people interacted, it was really a fairly positive environment for most people in that culture.

JH: I think you said it pretty well a minute ago that there is so much cultural resilience in Maya society and I think that they are not unique in that regard. Although because they are so visible today it is easy to appreciate them for that quality but my guess is that a lot of the pre historic indigenous populations of the new world had equal amounts of resilience and strength.

RA: It is just a fascinating story. The thinking is, what your thinking is you are not just taking a period of time and locking in that period of time and studying it but you are looking at… because I am a, I guess you would call me an anthro-historian. I say historian to keep me out of trouble with people who don't like anthropology. But that there was a tendency to study a period of time and leave it in isolation like that somehow, somewhere different. Well anthropologists of course look at the present time and didn't necessarily figure out where these things came from. So now there has to be; now you are saying you are seeing yourself much more of a connection between the past and the present and the relevance of the past to the presence and what people are needing to do?

JH: I think that that is true and there are a lot of sort of sayings like, "Protect the past for the future" or "If you don't understand the past."

RA: "You are doomed to repeat it."

JH: "You are doomed to repeat it" and all these things that make sense on kind of a common sense level. Archeologists are not really in the business of saving lives. We are not doctors, we don't perform operations of perform medicine. But we are I think, that our contributions to society can be in the form of helping to, not just enrich our appreciation of human, social cultural diversity, but to help us understand contemporary relationships in a historical prospective. It is still not…

RA: It is a tough connection.

JH: It is a difficult connection and is pretty esoteric I think for a lot of folks to comprehend.

RA: I actually moved away from history. I got back to it again recently but I moved away from it because I said, "History doesn't mean anything." I want to study what people are doing right now and figure out what motivates them and all that. Now I am going back, especially when you are studying native people you really have got to take that in, all of that together. And I spent a lot of time with Native American people, many of which are always looking to the past, living in their teepees, hunting the buffalo. I say, "You've got a beautiful culture right here. Why don't we look at it? Why don't we appreciate it?" But anyways there is just a lot, a whole bunch of different issues.

JH: There are a whole lot of issues I think. I am continually struck by how difficult it is, just as an example, to get started dialogues or discussions in our contemporary culture around socio economic inequities and disadvantage. The poor people, the poor folks, under classed, it is still very difficult for us to talk about them or to address those issues in a serious kind of intellectual or thoughtful way. I think that is one of the most glaring, in my view, discrepancies or disparities in Maya archeology or Mesoamerican

archeology, everyday common status folks have flown under the radar screen or off the radar screen all together in nearly every way you can think of.

RA: They are the people… and actually what happened was all the noble lords, all these guys they all became those people that you now see today. So everybody, the whole culture got compressed, you know a fairly narrow band of peasants.

JL: Yeah of peasants in relation to governors from elected officials or PRI parties or something like that. But these are folks that they didn't just grow food and sustain people, you know sustain the rulers and elites and stuff but they were 90% plus the population. So much of our research energy and resources is focused on the other 5% to 10%.

RA: _____. (22.15)

JL: Exactly. I think…

RA: That's why I think the period after the fall of the Maya is so interesting because you had all these different provincial developments that happened and the Spanish had to take every single one of them separately except for the ones that fought, that it really… and the culture was very strong but they didn't support the nobility of the big cities that they _____. (22.36) Anyway we could talk forever on that. I really want to pick your brain about religion aspect of it. What do you feel, what are the greatest insights are in your field of archeology?

JL: I think some of the potential insights for archeology have to do with understanding any particular social group or faction in relation to others, as one example…

RA: Sort of more of a global look?

JL: And our archeological context we kind of focus on a little microcosms of that. But I think there are some larger complications for how we understand the cultural diversity and can validate the interests of even the minority status groups in contemporary society. I think some of the insights into human biological variation and trying to kind of map out when folks came to the new world for instance…

RA: And how they got here.

JL: And how they got here, those questions are enormous in scale and we are just barely getting started addressing those with enough information.

RA: Very interesting. What do you think are your greatest discoveries?

JL: Personally?

RA: Yeah.

JL: Goodness. I think that being drawn to under-classed and in a way under-exposed segments of ancient populations if I had to talk about what I think are my greatest discoveries, they would focus on trying to bring understanding to misunderstood or badly understood the components of ancient populations. That is not really a very exciting answer to your question.

RA: No, no I think it is because I think you've got… this is one thing that I've been doing a lot of reading. I used to do a lot of… I have family that is Maya so I was just interested and we have traveled down there and do a lot of fun kind of stuff. Recently I have done more archeological, anthropological, but I kept saying, "I'm not learning anything about how the people lived. I'm not learning anything about the average Maya. How did the guy live every day? This pile of rocks is great but how did the people live that built it or supported it?" So you are really looking at the population and probably the

majority of the population that you now see today were those people that were just the common man within the Maya cities and how, what was their life like?

JL: What was their life like? That is not a discovery per se…

RA: No, no it is very interesting.

JL: The process of helping to bring understanding to or expand our understanding of these processes that are really kind of the motor of society. You can see a lot of archeological presentations, you can visit a lot of archeological sites; you can read a lot of archeological articles and magazine pieces and books and not really learn anything.

RA: Absolutely.

JL: You can see a lot of description about how some people did things and the description of major temple constructions and so forth. But in terms of what's new, that is being brought out that is new, you have to kind of dig deep and that is very important to me, to dig as deep as we can and to identify…

RA: That cultural archeology.

JL: What we don't know and go there.

RA: How has that worked out? I mean have you been able to… if you look at _____ (26.31) they have these, you look off in the distance where you look at _____'s work and he's talking about _____, he is talking about the structure of the downtown of the cities, all that kind of thing, outside, were you able to, when you look at a site have you been able to go and find those rural, the settlements that supported the local _____?

JL: Yes. In Central America you can easily, if you look, find smaller scale settlements, house remains, small community groups that existed outside of an urban

center and these were the folks that made and did and worked and provided for. That is easy enough to do. It is less obvious but the remains are there. I think a lot of folks are more drawn to what they can see easily on the landscape and those would be sort of the big urban centers. But some of those sites were occupied, inhabited by 10,000, 12,000, 15,000 people and the country of Belize, for example, there were more people that lived there in 8,700 then live there now.

RA: Yeah the same way _____ (27.41) area was 300,000 now; probably 3,000,000 then.

JL: It is easy enough to find those locations and folks have said, "Well if you see one, aren't they all the same?" The answer is, "No." I mean no more then, then is the case today.

RA: Here?

JL: Exactly. So you have to kind of get a broader sample to understand the diversity that was present.

RA: Very interesting. What is your greatest joy in the field? What gives you the greatest rush?

JL: I enjoy working with people who want to be archeologists; that want to do archeology. It is rewarding to feel like I have contributed somehow to their progress. It is rewarding to feel like I am making progress myself. So working on the archaic period in the Maya area, for example, of the poorly understood period of time….

RA: Way before…

JL: Before the Maya society was…

RA: Pre, pre, pre classic?

JL: Pre, pre, pre classic, pre ceramic. Feeling like I have begun to identify and take on a topic that from which we stand to gain a lot of information or learn quite a bit about.

RA: You know they say that the Ulmac (29.10) in the _____ groups had a lot to do with pre Maya but do you support that? Because it seems to me that the Maya were probably pre dating even some of those folks or at least at the same time.

JL: I do not believe that the _____ (29.31) civilization significantly pre dates the earliest recognizable Maya. I don't believe that Maya civilization is a direct outcome of their proximity of their more sophisticated Ulmac neighbors. I believe that in that part of the world between 1200, 1300 B.C. and 900 or 1000 B.C. there was an incredible amount of interaction between these neighboring regions and in some cases like in the Ulmac area there were established settlements and social hierarchies in some regions like the Maya area it is more difficult for us to see that and probably that wasn't the case. But just because those neighboring areas were inhabited by groups whose social structure was different, it doesn't mean that the Ulmac colonized the Maya or those sort of relationships of cultural…

RA: It's the whole issue of the Tultecs later which is very questionable.

JL: So I think there was in a lot of ways a kind of a co-evolution. It happened that for a long time Maya peoples were probably horticulturalists, gardeners, hunter, gather, collectors for a long time.

RA: Well they probably also went back, as they went back into the small provincial areas they probably started there. So that might have been longer. I like that. So often they try to combine everything and say, "This group did this and this is where this came from." You don't know who influenced who.

JL: Those are pretty easy solutions too I think.

RA: Yeah it's convenient. So your greatest joy in the field is really looking into the aspects, sort of the, people aren't really interested in it they haven't really looked into finding a lot of clues.

JL: Yeah.

RA: Do you feel it is important to involve Native groups in dealing with the Indian sites?

JL: I do, yeah. I think that that is important. I think it is important to involved descendant communities and I think as that term is applied it includes not only displaced Native American groups but freedman communities as well, descendants of slaves and slave populations here in the new world. I think that it is important to involved them in the research of their past.

RA: Have you involved Mayas anywhere?

JL: I have not involved Mayas in my work. In Belize which was formally British Honduras, the British worked hard to kind of run a lot of the Maya out so there aren't a lot of intact sort of well defined populations in the northern part of the country where I did a lot of my work. I recently was working in the Guatemala Highlands where there are a lot of Maya communities but my, sort of the topic of interest was _____ (32.38) sites and not to say that there weren't any cultural connections perhaps between _____ sites and Maya today but that is so much a longer bridge to span.

RA: Right. What about here in Texas have you involved Native groups here in Texas because you have been in the Gault sites or do you find that they know they are connected to?

JL: That's a two part question we'll take the first part. It is difficult to involve Native groups in Texas with academic research of Texas pre history or into Texas pre history. There has been so much displacement that a lot of federally recognized tribes are, I guess they are sort of set up or established or have points of contact in Oklahoma or far Northeast Texas for the Caddo for example and around central Texas it is a much, sort of, less visible presence I think.

RA: All the hunter gatherers are gone.

JL: The hunter, gatherers are gone. That may be an excuse as much as anything else. We do work or project sponsors are required to work with Native Americans in consultation types of relationships or rolls in some CRM, Cultural Research Management projects. Initiating those discussions, those consultations, CAS the Center here is working with the city of San Marcos to consult with Native American groups with respect to one of the sites here in town. That process described by federal law, the NAGPRA Legislation is long, drawn out, potentially complex but to get to the second part of your question there are different views I think in the relationship between contemporary Native American populations and pre historic remains. A lot of the most obvious sort of connections that archeologists would recognize or would understand material, cultural patterns have been severed. So it is difficult for us to see well you, 5,000 years ago here is a…

RA: It's like the Freemont sites out in Utah. All the local Indian groups claim it but there is no real evidence that they are related.

JL: No direct like _____ (35.14) man. Like who was this guy? Common sense tells us that he is an ancestral to Native American groups that may occupy the area today…

RA: But you don't necessarily know that?

JL: And I think that is one area where Native American groups probably suffer from how these relationships are defined by our legal system. They are difficult connections to make and they can't be established beyond a reasonable doubt and they are really at a disadvantage I think in terms of participating.

RA: Well also I think there are groups that want to assert control over certain things but there is no real evidence that they really have a right to do that.

JL: Sure.

RA: Even though you want that to be, I would imagine it would be tough. Like they involved… well obviously Caddo were all over the place but not every group is related to them. What work have you done in Texas?

JL: In Texas I have worked mostly in central Texas and at the Gault site in Bell County has been an important sort of source of inspiration and opportunity for me for a long time.

RA: Have you worked with the people from A & M?

JL: I worked at Gault with the people from UT Austin. Mike Collins.

RA: Mike Collins, I'm meeting with him in a couple of weeks.

JL: Okay.

RA: Also did you ever meet Mike Waters from A & M?

JL: I met Mike Waters several times and I never worked directly with Mike Waters at

Gault. I was there when his students and group from A & M were there. But Mike Collins was a mentor to me in a lot of ways.

RA: Oh that's great. These are old hands in the field?

JL: I think Mike Collins has been participating in Texas archeology for like 60 years or something like that.

RA: Oh so he's not even man.

JL: He's not a… he's a spry man.

RA: He's spry. Okay so you did Gault and then you did the other.

JL: The one here in town is Zatopec.

RA: That's here in town?

JL: Yeah it is.

RA: Oh I didn't realize that.

JL: The city of San Marcos is building, extending Wonder World Drive around the west part of town, it is sort of a loop to help get some of the traffic, truck traffic in particular from going through downtown. They are required by state and federal law to do cultural resource management in advance of beginning their roadway. One of the bit sites that was along the proposed alignment for Wonder World drive was a route called 41HY163 and that's just a trinomial designation for the Zatopec site which has been known for at least I think is the early 80's.

RA: What was there?

JL: Zatopec was a spot on the landscape that was like probably dozens of spots on the landscape around the San Marcos area. It is close to what was once kind of a running

creek, spring. So there is water there and it was just a place where residentially mobile hunters and gatherers stopped periodically to retool, refurbish their tool kits…

RA: So there was kind of stone there was their chert there.

JL: Chert outcrops buried nearby.

RA: Oh in San Marcos?

JL: Yeah here in San Marcos. All along the eastern part of central Texas, through the eastern part of central Texas runs the Valcany discartment (38.47) and chert is sort of present. It comes to the surface in seams and sort of tabular formations through the limestone. So there are plentiful supplies of chert.

RA: How old are these sites?

JL: Well like we were talking about earlier, here at Spring Lake, _____ (39.08) Springs here in San Marcos there is evidence of occupation from Clovis times through the entire span of the North American pre historic record. There may be pre Clovis there as well who really knows all the way to right now. But the Zatopec site is really, we don't think it was occupied nearly as long it just happens to be a place that was occupied repeatedly and sort of long enough in duration over these visitation episodes probably spanning, I'm going to guess, 4,000 or 5,000 years. People as they camped and lived there they dropped stuff.

RA: No there any evidence of any kind of improvement that the culture evolved from a simple to a more complex?

JL: We see evidence of significant changes. I wouldn't use the word "improvement or development" to describe those changes. These are, in central Texas forever, nearly forever, hunter gatherer groups that lived here decided to be residentially mobile and that

was, particularly later in times when their neighbors to the east were village farming Caddo and their neighbors to the west were village farming pueblo societies, neighbors far to the north, there were plains villages and if you go far enough into northern Mexico you can find residentially stable or sedentary populations as well. So hunter gatherers in central Texas pursued a residentially mobile life way for millennia and even for several hundred years when neighbors that they knew and interacted with on all sides were doing something else. I think this region is plentiful enough in natural resources that there is no need to settle down.

RA: There is no push.

JH: No reason to settle down in kind of a village way of life.

RA: Any examples of this group of people that had perhaps been settled at one time and became hunter, gathers?

JL: Were settled at one time and became hunter, gatherers? No we don't really see evidence of that at all. We thought for a little while that we had some possible evidence for maize or corn at the site and some of the pollen record but that turned out to not be the case, not that that would have indicated that they were settling down or anything.

RA: Right they may have been experimenting with growing stuff.

JL: Right experimenting with agriculture or even trading for some food stuff.

RA: What about Gault, the question I really wanted to ask you about Gault is have you been caught up at all in the Clovis controversy?

JL: Which part of the Clovis controversy?

RA: Well the issue, if you look at the Center for the First American at A & M they talk about the Clovis mafia (42.08) and they say, "This is the bottom line there is nothing beneath that." Now I wondered what the Gault site plays in all of that?

JL: The Gault site is one of the most extensive records of Clovis culture that we have in North America and there is probably pre Clovis there. I think both Mike Collins and Mike Waters have come out publicly for looking for pre Clovis, seeking pre Clovis and they probably will find it if they haven't already. I think the value of Gault for Clovis is in the sheer abundance and diversity of Clovis related technological debris.

RA: One of the biggest sites?

JL: Easily one of the biggest Clovis sites.

RA: Well I'll be darned.

JL: Most Clovis sites are dots on the landscape are isolated finds a point here, a tool fragment there. Some are buried stratified deposits. I don't think very, very few have generated almost a million artifacts from Clovis contexts.

RA: Wow and Gault has a million?

JL: Yeah and that is just a matter of…

RA: How far back does it go?

JL: Radio carbon years it would go back to 11 ½ thousand years ago that is about 13,000 calendar years.

RA: That's kind of the bottom level?

JL: That is sort of the bottom level. They have dates from Gault that go further than that and those dates are associated with artifacts supposedly pre Clovis.

RA: You don't know if there has been a shifting of the earth?

JL: That is a great question and I think that's a distinct possibility, it may not be a strong possibility but they are in the process of doing more work to be able to kind of address those questions. So early dates associated with artifacts don't always mean that people were actually there.

RA: No there is a lot of upheaval and a lot of change.

JL: A lot of soil movement.

RA: Are you still doing work at Gault or is that?

JL: I have been involved up until very recently in some of the ongoing analysis and presentation, publication of information from Gault.

RA: Right so you are doing a lot of the analysis?

JL: I have been helping with some of the analysis. I wouldn't call it a lot but some.

RA: That is kind of exciting. What work did you do in Guatemala and Belize?

JL: In Guatemala most recently we had a project that started, that ran through about mid-late December into early February of this past year.

RA: When did it start?

JL: It started around mid December of 2008 and I got home just a little bit before Valentines Day. So it was pretty recent.

RA: Was it better, more decent weather?

JL: It was pretty nice. It was actually kind of chilly. We were working in the western highlands of Guatemala near _____ (45.13) at a site that has been known for a while and was believed to have artifacts associated with _____, horse remains, coarse remains. We didn't confirm the association. I think that probably the _____ bone bed at this particular location pre dates the artifacts that are from there.

We also didn't, weren't able to recover any artifacts in our controlled excavations though some are present in a little museum there at the site so they have come from somewhere. But we had a geo archeologist with us on that particular project who kind of helped with our paleontologists and our archeological eye.

RA: So you were hoping it was really, really old?

JL: We were hoping it was sort of Clovis in Guatemala and it may be Clovis in Guatemala or in the Guatemalan version of Clovis but at this particular site the artifacts are probably not associated with the mega funnel remains that…

RA: What about the thought that the Yucatan peninsula was, well of course they know it was like during the ice age it was much, much bigger. Is it possible that there are Clovis sites off the coast?

JL: I would say that it is probable that there are Clovis sites off the coast.

RA: So that's where a lot of…

JL: Some of my colleges are actually looking underwater beneath the gulf shore line right now for submerged sites off the coast of Florida for example. There is a guy that is interested in some of the submerged land forms off of the Mexican gulf coast. There ought to be a _____ (46.55) sites out there. There are some _____ that are now under water, cave systems through the Yucatan that have these human remains. One was dated to about 11,000 or so.

RA: So that's off the coast?

JL: That's at the shore line, near the shoreline but I think just inland. The relationship is that as sea level has come up a lot of the Paleo shoreline is now submerged; but also as you come inland as the sea level comes up these inland water tables get pushed up.

RA: So a lot of the caves are flooded.

JL: A lot of the caves are inundated as well yeah not under the ocean but as a response to the sea level rising.

RA: The water being pushed in.

JL: Yeah.

RA: What about you were in Guatemala too you said?

JL: That was in December through early February of this past year looking for Paleo-Indians and I would like very much to go back to Guatemala either _____ (47.50) or another part of the country. I think there is a long record of occupation from Paleo-Indian or Clovis time periods up until 1000 B.C. that is virtually untapped.

RA: Well when you do these things how do you get funded to do them, do you go out and request funding, college funding?

JL: We do request funding. That particular project was funded by the National Geographic Society.

RA: Oh really?

JL: Mostly by the National Geographic Society we got donation to help with some radio carbon dating, actually from the Gulf School for Archeological Research.

RA: Gulf School?

JL: The Gulf School that is sort of the non profit that is associated with Mike Collins work at Gault. We had, how else did we get funding for that project? A couple of people kind of came and participated and paid their own way, you know bought their own groceries and stuff like that.

RA: Do you continue with… does the college give you time to do that kind of thing?

JL: No I have to pay my own way at the college so I was on vacation for a lot of that time. I had built up some comp time we call it. I was sick for a couple of days, sick leave. But I have to cover my time here at Texas State for extended time.

RA: So they aren't really interested in far away projects?

JL: Well they are probably interested in me doing the work but they don't pay me to go to do it.

RA: That is interesting. Is there funding out there to do this kind of thing?

JL: You can find some yes. The search for the earliest Americans is I think probably one of the most high profile, kind of dynamic archeological problems that people are working on these days. You know as these topics become popular or common they draw a lot of attention and probably some funding as well. I felt like for that particular project combining early Paleo-Indian research which is a very important effort these days with a part of the new world, central America, where very, very little of that work has been done was a fundable combination of topics. I would imagine that we would be able to get some more money.

RA: Most of the people just stayed at the top where they can see. It's like the thing I guess it's in Peru where they had those massive agricultural developments in the western parts and they didn't study it, they didn't think it was important because there weren't any big buildings. Then they discovered that these guys had _____ the Amazon jungle.

JL: As scientists it is important for us to look a little bit beneath the surface to see what is there.

RA: Yeah I like that. What other sites have you worked with on the gulf, any other, you say the ones in San Marcos and then Gault?

JL: The one here in San Marcos, the Gault site in Bell County I worked there for several years. Through our activities here at CAS we have the opportunity to at least do some survey level recording at sites. One of my favorite projects we just finished up was down in Segine it was funded by a historic pottery foundation, the Wilson Historic Pottery Foundation. These are descendants of some slave brothers who made pottery, Wilson Pottery as slaves and then after emancipation opened their own business making Wilson Pottery. As far as anybody has been able to tell this was the first African American business in Texas. So the Center for Archeological Studies was fortunate enough to be able to work with the Wilson Historic Pottery Foundation to help conserve and document one of their pottery manufacturing sites. That was pretty exciting. We are doing, have been doing for the last couple of years some contract work with Texas Parks and Wildlife at one of their state parks in Freestone County out at Fairfield Lake State Park. There is a, we would call it an abandoned historic cemetery, out there that is not platted, you can't find it at the county clerk's office but has a bunch of unmarked graves and one marked grave with a headstone that has fallen over. That person we think we have identified as a woman who was a slave and kept, was given her slave name and after emancipation was married and we found her marriage records there at the county clerk's office. So probably that is another descendant community, abandoned cemetery that we have suggested to Parks and Wildlife that they do some more oral interviews with people that may be descendant from people in that cemetery or from the same family. In Cultural Resource Management the opportunities to work at any particular place kind of

come and go. So it helps to have a broad range of interests so that the work that we do is not just compliance based but we can find important points to elaborate.

RA: One of your specialties is lithics?

JL: Yeah I guess that's true.

RA: Now that is a pretty big thing here in the state of Texas?

JL: It's a pretty big thing in the state of Texas and I hesitate because a lot of people say they specialize in lithics and probably have a lot more expertise then I do.

RA: Right its just one of your areas of interest?

JL: Right. So there are questions that are of interest to me that we can easily approach through lithic studies, lithic analysis.

RA: What about household archeology? that is an interesting, I saw that in your areas and I thought that was kind of interesting. What is all that about?

JL: Household archeology is particularly common in Meso-America or in parts of the world where the people that we study were sedentary so they occupied a dwelling or a physical space for most of their lifetime. It is, we might think of household archeology as kind of a scale of analysis and we kind of focus our scale end from a region to a site to kind of a better, smaller, well defined domestic space and the people that occupied that space were nuclear families, extended families and attached workers in some cases. The value of household archeology comes in being able to sort of zoom in on intimate scale daily relations, decisions, activities, priority schemes without I guess being, not distracted but confounded by a sample of human diversity that is too big. I'm struggling to find the right words but with household archeology I think you are about as close as you can get to what people do or did or how they lived their lives on a daily basis and you can see

individual level decision making more easily there then you can if you look at monumental buildings for example.

RA: Well I want to ask you, in as I say in _____ (55.40) there were some examples of course _____ was very, very late. But _____ had large wood structures that people basically lived in. In the Yucatan you had the structure that was sort of oval with stucco in the inside and people living in hammocks and you had the cooking thing. Did you find, like in _____ it looked like the ancient houses were stone, circular stone houses. Were there differences, for instance for the Maya, were there different types of structures that you saw?

JL: Yeah people built houses differently I think based mostly on what kinds of materials they had available to them. So in stone rich areas you will find a lot of low, sort of foundations and alignments of cut or uncut stone. In stone poor areas you are not likely to find as much of that stuff. That is kind of common sense but that has a lot to do with how we reconstruct or understand socio economic hierarchies for instance. There is a thought that more labor intensive or construction materials kind of indicate kind of a higher status. I think a lot of that variability has simply to do with what is at hand.

RA: I thought that the circular stone structures were very strange I had never seen them. They were circular, which was kind of the structures that the Maya built later, but one thing they were very small.

JL: They were small. From what we understand from those and what we have come to understand from household archeology is that the structure itself only encompasses a small range of the activities that take place in the domestic sphere. So actually most of the stuff happens in the yard.

RA: You washed outside, you welled outside and you cooked outside.

JL: Play outside, teach outside, learn outside. But archeologists are sort of drawn to…

RA: The American model.

JL: The American model where we go to the front door and we go into the house and see what happens in the house and in the Maya area at least most of the stuff takes place outside.

RA: But a lot of people may have lived in that main house. At least the more modern Mayas had hammocks and they all sort of hung from the ceiling.

JL: Yeah and they could put those hammocks away when sleep time was over and it became a different kind of space.

RA: Yeah very interesting. The field has changed. What do you think in generality what are some of those changes to the field that you have seen? We have kind of covered it a little bit? What are some of the major changes that you have seen happen?

JL: My guess is that there has been for a long time a push to make archeology relevant to society to make archeology, I think maybe in some cases the term might be more politically correct, I don't think that is the appropriate way to describe it but involving descendent communities to make it more accountable to the people that it focuses on, that archeologists look at, to involve them more. For a long time, this was decades ago it was kind of a gentleman's past time and still I think has a lot of ties with collecting and sort of…

RA: Stealing.

JL: Art historical appreciation, stealing is one word for that in some context. It struggled to be a science. It has struggled first to become a science and then, this was not so many decades ago and still in some cases true today, it has struggled to become less scientific and more humanistic. These are changes that occur sort of at a scale across the country. Archeology in North America would be different from archeology in Europe or archeology in Latin America. But the field I think would or should or will kind of continue to evolve in these directions as it struggles to be relevant to the people that we try to talk to. Archeologists can talk to themselves all day long but if that's all we do I think when we finally stick our heads up out of the sand we will find out that people don't really care as much about what we have to say as we thought.

RA: Interesting it is trying to make it real world.

JL: I think that is an ongoing struggle for us all the time. We don't do a good job expressing why that is important. For example, in Texas you don't need to have a license to be a professional archeologist. You need to have a license to be a hair cutter, you need to have a license to be a plumber, to be in all kinds of other fields or professions but you don't need a license to be a professional archeologist. So I think in a lot of ways we still are kind of at the point of kind of curiosity and, "Well isn't that neat but what does it really mean or why do we care about that?" I think archeologists will struggle with that for a long time.

RA: It is interesting when you talk to people that work directly for an agency or people that work in academia there is quite bit of a difference in the breadth of their interest orientations in academia. They are less constrained by the necessity of getting something done for a highway system.

JL: Less constrained by common sense or real world time line. I'm just kidding but there are… you can see how archeology needs to be applied differently in each of the different contexts. We have a hard time with that.

RA: What needs further excavation and discovery?

JL: What needs more excavation and discovery?

RA: Yeah what would you say are the things that really need to be looked at further? You can probably answer that by what you have already said.

JL: Goodness gracious what needs more excavation? That is a difficult question to answer. I think it would be easier for me to sort of rant about what I think needs less excavation.

RA: Less?

JL: Less is more. What needs more focused attention I think are the boundaries of our understanding of the past. For instance, with our work at the Zatopac site here in San Marcos we have focused our analysis, after the field work, our analysis on understanding, among other things, gendered labor divisions and how these might have changed through time. There are…

RA: How would you find that out?

JL: That's a difficult question to address and I think we can only get at it sort of weakly in a couple of cases. I wouldn't say that we need more excavation to understand gendered labor divisions in pre historic societies but we do need to conduct our excavations with this question in mind if we ever hope to make progress and I think whether or not we need more excavations I don't know. But the excavations that are

going to take place could be sort of informed by different kinds of questions and I think that would help us make significant progress.

RA: Is there a connection between the people, this is a strange question, but do you feel there is a connection between the people in the Guatemala and the Yucatan and the people here? Is there any kind of connection?

JL: The indigenous people you mean? Other then the fact that they were here in ancestral population before the Europeans came to the new world, there is probably not much connection culturally, genetically, not that I understand.

RA: Okay so really quite tremendously different?

JL: Quite different I think so.

RA: What do you say your interest in the Gault site is?

JL: My interest in the Gault site is multi fold. For me personally it has been an opportunity to understand some of the important social processes of learning and how younger people in society acquire the skills that they need to become competent, contributing members. We see a lot of mistakes, errors in tool making and tool manufacturing and we can see, I believe, not just mistakes but we can see guided mistakes and we can see interventions for correcting those mistakes. I think that that will be, hopefully will be an area where ongoing analysis at Gault and other related sites can really kind of help us understand historic populations a lot better.

RA: That is fascinating. That has got to take a very sensitive understanding of what you are looking at.

JL: Yeah I mean we have to look at some of these artifacts that have evidence of patterned mistakes from a different prospective.

RA: What would you like your legacy to be? What do you want to be remembered for?

JL: I want to be remembered as a nice guy who cared about people I worked with.

RA: Is that not a common description of?

JL: I wouldn't say it's an uncommon description. I think it is easy to lose sight of our contemporary relationships with others as we go full board into our profession, sort of professional career to advance our cause.

RA: You get kind of focused on what you want?

JL: Yeah we get focused on want and I think one of the values of archeology is that people are in it to learn and people are drawn to it to learn about something. In a lot of cases that something has to do with themselves and in some cases it doesn't. But it creates a context for a free exchange of information, a free exchange for experience, a free experience of prospective and approaches and it has, in that regard, it has a lot to do with how we talk to each other and how we interact with each other.

RA: So you really, really want to be remembered as a teacher?

JL: Maybe in some ways. That is very important to what we do.

RA: I want to thank you very much. I have some other questions I want to ask you.

End of transcript.