

Panorama Estates Neighborhood Newsletter

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THE ARCHEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF TUMAMOC

by Ellen Paige

(This article is based upon an online lecture by Drs. Suzy and Paul Fish given 26 June 2020 through the Arizona State Museum/University of Arizona Lecture Series)



The name of our very popular local hill, Tumamoc, is based on the O'Odham word for "horned lizard", an important animal in O'Odham religion. The O'Odham are the descendants of the historic inhabitants of Tumamoc. Although Tumamoc has been inhabited for thousands of years, the village buildings and artifacts of these historic ancestors have been carefully documented and date as far back as 1350 BCE.

Tumamoc is a Trincheras ("trenches") site---large hilltop areas on volcanic hills containing complete villages, with terraces and encircling dry-laid stone walls. Although there are many Trincheras sites in northern Mexico, Tumamoc had special attributes that made it particularly suited to serve primarily as a ceremonial site, and only secondarily as a dwelling site.

Surrounded by acequia- irrigated land, and easily visible to the many villages along the Santa Cruz, Tumamoc is thought to have served as an astrological observatory---the horizon calendar measures time by marking where the sun rises over the mountains each day--and smoke could be used to signal significant chronological events to the surrounding villages. There are pictographic solstice markers carved in the rock on Tumamoc---a triangle of light points directly to the center of a spiral on the summer and winter solstice.

Tumamoc also served as a ceremonial destination for the surrounding people. It is covered with a literal timeline of ceremonial rock art, as opposed to the villages on the floodplain below, which had none. Lots of burnt corn was found in the buildings of Tumamoc; this was used not for eating but for ceremonial purposes. The wintertime temperature at the top of Tumamoc is 20 degrees F warmer than the floodplain, so early corn for ceremonies could be started on top of the mountain to take advantage of the winter rains.

The flanks of Tumamoc are covered with an unusual number of Saguaros, which were probably central in the Saguaro Wine Ceremony, a celebration of the summer rains. Another indication of Tumamoc's ceremonial function is the pottery found on the mountain; that pottery was not made on Tumamoc---this can be determined by the temper in the clay--but rather made elsewhere and carried up to the top of Tumamoc, probably for religious purposes (like a potluck). And finally, many circular structures found on the top of Tumamoc were ceremonial in function--no domestic artifacts were found inside.

The post-holes for these large, circular, pit house "Community Rooms" were cut 70 cm into the caliche layer (imagine how hard that was with no metal tools!), and each contained a characteristic stone pillar which makes a distinct sound when struck. One of these Community Rooms was found right under the modern road we now use to walk up...

In addition to its ceremonial significance, Tumamoc served as a trading center: obsidian has been found (not a local stone), and shells from the California Pacific coast as well as the Sea of Cortez are common. Additionally, as mentioned above, the remains of pottery found on Tumamoc came from all over the Tucson basin.

Finally, Tumamoc was the home of early architecture and agriculture, all of which required communal cooperation for success. The low, stacked stone walls there are the earliest communal "architecture" found in Tucson. There is nearly 2 kilometers of these walls; it has been calculated that it required 1,013 "person-days" of work to build them. The terraces behind the walls were residential areas; dwellings consisted of a circular or rectangular stone foundation with a pole and brush frame covered by packed earth. House clusters shared walls, with flat, cleared areas located outside of the residences; there was probably a plaza, but this was disturbed by modern construction. "Cupules" or carved-out bowls in the rocks are common and were used for grinding and for gaming.

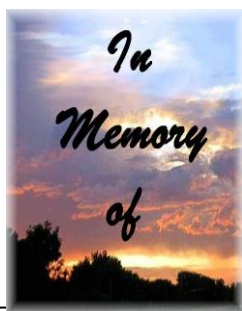
Agriculture here began long before 1350BC, and the pre-village inhabitants were farmers. The earliest corn found in Tucson dates to 3700 BC (4200 BC in Mexico). Tumamoc and A-Mountain form an igneous dike into the Santa Cruz River, making it an ideal place for farming. The earliest irrigation documented at the base of A-Mountain dates to 1600 BC, and consisted of a large, gravity-fed irrigation system. Still used in northern Mexico today, these irrigation systems require communal labor at particular times of the year to function effectively.

Overall, the Fish's lecture brought me to a much greater appreciation of the archeology of Tumamoc. It was so much more than just an easily defended hill. Rather, it served as a cultural, ceremonial and religious landmark for nearly 2,000 years (1350 BC to 450 AD). And to think we get to live here!

Further reading:

"Trinchera Sites in Time, Space and Society" Suzy Fish and Paul Fish, editors--see the Chapter on Tumamoc Hill

"New Perspectives on Rock Art" Gayle Hartman and Peter Boyle, editors



JOHN FOLEY

John Foley passed away peacefully at home on Saturday, April 30, 2021. John served in the US Navy at Pearl Harbor, HI and had a forty-year career in Mine Engineering which took him throughout the US and to Peru, China, Chile and Mexico. John had such a heart for personal connection with people, and impacted the lives of everyone he met, making them feel connected, listened to and special. He was lately an avid cyclist and enjoyed all the friends he made. He is survived by his wife Mary Lou Gonzalez, two sons, a daughter and numerous grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

LEASH LAW IN PANORAMA ESTATES

For the safety of all our residents, pets and wildlife, Panorama Estates requests that all our dog-owners comply with the leash laws in effect in Pima County. Please keep your dog on leash at all times whenever outside of your property boundaries, and if you have a canine escape artist at home, please ensure they are securely contained on your property. Also, the noise ordinance applies to barking dogs, so please avoid disturbing your neighbors and make sure that your dogs are quiet in the evening and early morning. Thanks for your cooperation!



MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR PEA ANNUAL MEETING SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2021

Join your neighbors for the Panorama Estates Association Annual Meeting, to be held Saturday October 9 from 3--5pm. All homeowners and residents are welcome. At this time, this year's meeting will be on Zoom. Watch for more details in your September PEA newsletter.



Next Brush and Bulky---week of August 23, 2021---Have items at curbside by Monday, August 23rd for pick-up that week.

Brush & Bulky will collect:

- Brush, tree trunks, branches and other green waste (up to 5 feet long and 24 inches in diameter)
- Lumber (up to 5 feet long and stacked in a separate pile)
- PVC and metal pipes (up to 5 feet long)
- Railroad ties (limit 5)
- Furniture, carpet, and doors
- Lawn mowers with fuel tank and crank case removed
- Scrap metal (bicycles, swing sets, etc., broken into 5 foot lengths)
- Cacti (must be contained in a box - up to 25 lbs.)
- Appliances (remove freezer/refrigerator doors)
- Car tires (limit of five automobile tires. Tires must be separated from pile. A separate truck will pick them up within the week.)
- Metal drums (empty and cut in half)

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PEA BOARD RECRUITMENT

Are you interested in joining the PEA board? Are you looking to get involved, meet your neighbors, and have the satisfaction of volunteering? Then consider running for the PEA board. PEA is a non-profit organization with 4 officers, board meetings 4 times a year and an annual meeting. Time commitment is about 1-1.5 hours per meeting. There is no financial obligation and as we partner with the city and other non-profits, it is a great way to serve and be involved.

For more information and details, contact us at:

panoramaestatesneighborhood@gmail.com



2021 PEA BOARD MEMBERS

panoramaestatesneighborhood@gmail.com

Mary Jo Ghory, President

Nathan Hall, Vice President

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Jill Hofer, Member-at-Large

Larry Chavez, Plans Review Liaison

PLANNING TO BUILD IN PANORAMA ESTATES?

Please contact the Panorama Estates Association Board for review well BEFORE you begin grading or construction. Cooperation of builders is crucial in this process, and greatly appreciated!

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