



Old Pueblo Archaeology Center presents:



# Hohokam/Patayan to O'odham/Yuman: The Cultural Landscape of the Lower Gila River

A Free Presentation by  
Archaeologist Dr. Aaron M. Wright



**Thursday September 21, 2017**

**6 to 8:30 p.m.**

at the "Third Thursday Food for Thought" Dinner:  
**Karichimaka Mexican Restaurant**  
5252 S. Mission Rd., Tucson

*Contact Old Pueblo Archaeology Center for reservations\**

*Photos courtesy of Aaron M. Wright showing examples of petroglyphs at Sears Point along the lower Gila River*

The lower Gila River is a complicated cultural landscape. Though for many this remote region in southwestern Arizona is a *terra incognita*, over millennia, different cultural traditions ebbed and flowed along the river's banks, with generation after generation leaving their mark on the rocks and in the sand. Major rock art sites, such as Sears Point and Painted Rock, attest to the depth and richness of this cultural landscape. However, when brought under dominion of the United States in 1848/1854, the lower Gila was seemingly void of indigenous settlements. Envisioned as no-man's land, or a hinterland at best, this demographic scenario a mere 150 years ago has all too often be unwittingly projected into the much deeper past. A lack of concerted archaeological and ethnohistorical research in this region has perpetuated this distorted perspective. In this Third Thursday Food for Thought, Dr. Aaron Wright will cast contemporary light on the archaeology and post-contact history of the lower Gila River, drawing on recent research emerging from ongoing efforts to establish a Great Bend of the Gila National Monument. Dr. Wright will provide an overview of that effort, and detail how collaboration with descendant communities is helping to refine broader understanding of contemporary tribal connections to this landscape.

**This month's guest presenter:** Aaron Wright is a Preservation Archaeologist at Archaeology Southwest, a nonprofit organization in Tucson. He earned a Masters in 2006 and PhD in 2011, both from Washington State University. He is a co-editor of *Leaving Mesa Verde: Peril and Change in the Thirteenth-Century Southwest* and author of *Religion on the Rocks: Hohokam Rock Art, Ritual Practice, and Social Transformation*. This later work won the 2012 Don D. and Catherine S. Fowler Book Prize. His most recent book is the co-authored *The Great Bend of the Gila: Contemporary Native American Connections to an Ancestral Landscape*, which presents the results of a collaborative ethnohistory project with 11 American Indian tribes. That effort was recognized with a 2017 Governor's Archaeology Advisory Commission Award in Public Archaeology. As an undergraduate, Aaron dreamed of working amid the temples of Mesoamerica. Little did he know then that his true calling would come in the form of sand dunes and desert pavements.

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**\* RESERVATIONS REQUIRED: PLEASE WAIT TO HEAR FROM OLD PUEBLO THAT YOUR RESERVATION HAS BEEN CONFIRMED BEFORE ATTENDING** because the Fire Code limits how many guests we can have in the restaurant meeting room. Reservations must be requested at [info@oldpueblo.org](mailto:info@oldpueblo.org) or 520-798-1201 before 5 p.m. on the Wednesday before the program date. Guests may select and purchase dinner at the restaurant. There is no entry fee. Donations will be requested to benefit Old Pueblo's educational efforts.