This excavation, located adjacent to Pioneer & Military Memorial Park, 13th Ave. & Jefferson Street, Phoenix, AZ, under the authority of the City of Phoenix, occurred in four phases with 2 months of excavations over a 5-month period during the autumn of 2010 to March 2011 due to a planned storm drain. The excavations were along Madison and 13th Avenues; originally planned for 6 feet wide the excavated area eventually encompassed the entire width of both avenues. It is very interesting to note that remains of pit houses and artifacts were found beginning just 10cm below the current ground surface.

The dig came after earlier projects in the 1940’s and 1984. Before commencing the staff carefully studied the findings of the earlier dig done by K.J. Schroeder. The estimated time period for the village settlement, supported by the findings, or “the project era”, was about 500-1000 A.D.

Generally, the discoveries included:

a. concentrated clusters of some 250 prehistoric features, 80 pit houses, extramural features (activities other than residential) and mortuary features. For e.g., clusters of finished and partial stone axe heads and tools suggest that specific areas in the village were sites for making these items over an extended time period.

b. numerous trash areas.

c. Concentrations of fire pits, aka “hornos” (Spanish for “ovens”), 3 found with a large, round, flat stone intact in the center bottom of the pit.

d. Many storage structures or granaries next to pit house remnants, the granary being a deep, nicely cut, round hole dug into the hard caliche ground with sloping walls meant to repel rodents.

e. 61 cremation burial sites.

f. Some 15,000 ceramic fragments, about 800 shell pieces including a shell pendant.

g. Several hundred manos and mutates (the handheld stone tools and stone “bowls” used for pulverizing grain & other raw materials.

h. 1000’s of pottery fragments and shards, some painted and decorated, including one piece with the image of a human face, and figurines, some of which depicted people and their working livelihoods. Note much of the pottery material is not common to the local area, thus suggesting trade with other regions.

i. Several stone “sensors”, an object holding flammable materials. Note that different materials result in differing flame colors.

j. a large canal, likely starting in the now-Sky Harbor Airport area, bringing water to the village, called Canal 5 or Canal Calinas, running northwesterly just south of the excavation area, which continues on to the site of Los Calinas.

k. 1000’s of post holes, other pits and wall trenches.

Observations and conclusions include:

a. families lived in pit houses in the same general area over several succeeding generations, perhaps moving the house site a few feet one direction or another from one generation to the next.

b. pit houses were concentrated together in discrete clusters with open space between clusters.
c. cremation burials were found to be in the center of the courtyard.
d. houses faced a common area or courtyard
e. the Hohokam cremated about 90% of the dead until about 1100 A.D.
f. it was common for people with similar skills to live and work in the same specific area, practicing and teaching the skill and providing the community with that product or service.
g. axe materials probably came from the Mogollon Rim area.
h. no ball court was found although it is thought the village had one, perhaps built about 800 A.D., placed along the margin of the village site, and now is likely under the present-day cemetery or other area buildings.
i. the village of La Villa covered a large circular area and likely had a population of about 200 in the early era to a maximum of about 500 people at the end of the studied era.
j. no modern, historic pioneer artifacts were found.
k. most villagers were farmers.
l. large catastrophic burns of the village were rare.
m. two of the cremation sites had many figurines with the remains.
n. This dig resulted in a much higher density of discoveries than that of K.J. Schroeder, due to many more restrictions on his dig.

All artifacts found are currently stored at the Desert Archaeology lab in Tucson. After examination all will be given to Pueblo Grande Museum. The dig staff tried to find any and all small and/or rare artifacts, thus all dirt and findings were screened. Upon conclusion of the dig all excavations were recovered with the remaining dirt.

The Salt River Pima Maricopa community was consulted for the dig, whose tribal officials blessed the burials, and all human remains will be repatriated to the tribe for cultural reinterment.

*Note: the above report is based upon the note-taking of Pioneers’ Cemetery Association Secretary Robert Cox, his own interpretation of the presentation, as well as numerous comments, corrections and facts added by Dr. Lindeman, himself.