HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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The Newsletter is published four times per year by the Houston Archeological Society. Contributions of news items, short articles and information of archeological significance should be sent to the Editor - Al R. Duke, 1706 Oaks Drive, Pasadena, Texas 77502.

# # # # #

HAS Officers - 1974-75

Chairman - John Herbert, 5935 Dellfern, Houston, Texas 77035

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Directors - Alexander Macnab, Shirley Thompson, Jack Klatt

# # # # #

HAS Programs - 1975

January - Dr. John Keller, Texas Highway Archeological Staff, spoke on Subsistence Potentials at the Davis Site and Their Possible Application to Caddoan Area Studies.

February - Dr. Dee Ann Story discussed Carbon-14 Dating and its Application to the Davis Site.

March - Dr. Kathleen Gilmore spoke on The Keeran Site: The Probable Site for LaSalle's Fort St. Louis in Texas.

# # # # #

Coming Events in the World of Archeology

The Southwest Federation of Archeological Societies annual meeting - April 4, 5, 6, 1975. Hosted by Iraan Archeological Society.

Archaeological Society of New Mexico annual meeting - April 25, 26, 27. Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The Society of Americal Archeology annual meeting - May 8, 9, 10, 1975. Host will be Southern Methodist University (Adolphus Hotel, Dallas, Texas).

Texas Archeological Society field school - June 14-21, 1975. Floydada, Texas.

1975 Rock Art Symposium - August 30-31, 1975 at El Paso, Texas.

Texas Archeological Society annual meeting, hosted by the Southern Texas Archaeological Association, will be held in San Antonio October 31 - November 2, 1975.

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Galveston Island Site 41GV66

Work continues on the site. A large work force is required to implement new techniques being used. Call Barbara Burger, Lou Fullen or John Herbert if you have any questions about dates and times.

# # # # #

Interior Incising in Pottery from Coastal Southeast Texas

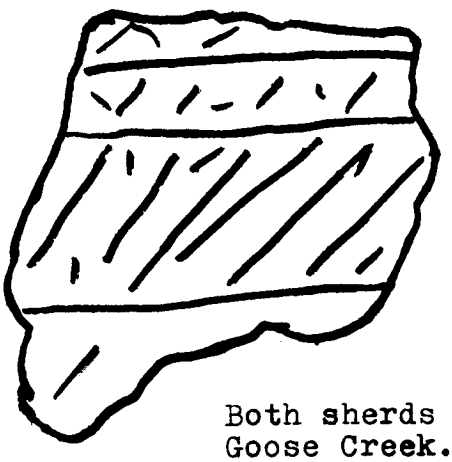
A. R. Duke

Interior incising or decoration on pottery from southeast Texas is rare. In 1971, Neyland and Aten reported that out of more than 20,000 sherds, collected from over 100 sites in the Houston-Galveston Bay area and the area between Sabine Lake and Galveston Bay, only 15 sherds exhibited interior incising. Ten of these sherds were from upper Galveston Bay, one from Addicks, three from Sabine Lake and one from Bolivar Peninsula. The purpose of the Neyland-Aten report was to show the presence of relatively rare decorative style and to suggest its significance. The conclusions reached were "this trait, although possibly associated with Caddoan ceramic technology, more likely is associated with the ceramic technology of the Lower Mississippi Valley area which becomes much more evident in the Galveston Bay area after 1000 A.D."

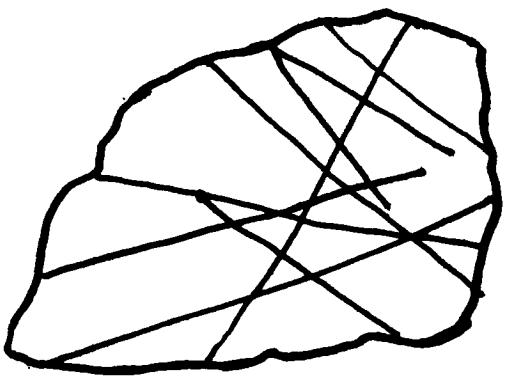
Lending support to the evidence of relative scarcity of incised pottery in this area are the sherds found recently by the writer on sites 41HR72 and 41HR73 - both upper Galveston Bay sites previously reported in the HAS Newsletter. Two sherds (out of 5000) were found on 41HR73 and one (out of over 400) on 41HR72. Two of the sherds are illustrated below.

Reference

Neyland, Wayne B. and Aten, Laurence E., "Interior Incising in Coastal Southeast Texas: Its Presence and Significance". Houston Archeological Society Newsletter No. 35, March 1971.



41HR72



41HR73

Both sherds are sand tempered Goose Creek.

# # # # #

Site Reporting

The following articles by Bill McClure and Lee Patterson are just what we are looking for in the HAS Newsletter. Both articles deal with local archeology and such reporting is sorely needed. Bill McClure states he has more material in various stages of preparation on the White Oak Bayou project. Let's hear from some of our other members also!

Prehistoric occupation of White Oak Bayou watershed. W.L. McClure

In recent issues of the Houston Archeological Society Newsletter, A.R. Duke and L.W. Patterson have called attention to the lack of and need for reporting of archeological sites in the Houston area. This is an effort to respond to that need. The development of land to meet the needs of modern civilization is altering and destroying much of the evidence of prehistoric civilizations. Every piece of information about these sites should be recorded so that present and future students of mankind will have access to it.

White Oak Bayou was chosen for particular personal attention primarily due to its proximity. Frequent short spontaneous visits were possible and productive. Over the years these visits have demonstrated that many sites with a variety of cultural remains still exist in the area. Apparently there are no published reports of prehistoric life within the White Oak Bayou watershed.

Methods: Evidence of prehistoric activities was located by examining the banks of the bayou and areas of surface disturbance. Reports were submitted to the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory for assignment of site numbers and to determine if previous data had been reported. Efforts were made through TARL and HAS to locate other persons who had knowledge of the area.

Disturbance of the soil for municipal activities sometimes destroys sites. At times only a part of the site is lost. The residue is then exposed to continual disturbance until the surface is stabilized by vegetative cover. Erosion exposes, mixes up and then displaces the evidence of prehistoric life. If the artifacts are not found and collected they are soon beyond salvage.

Sites were revisited at irregular intervals as further erosion exposed more material. Erosion of the sites is sometimes extended over a longer period due to continued disturbance of the surface by operation of motorbikes and by other human activities.

All artifacts were collected. No excavation was performed. As the sites become stabilized by vegetative cover, the artifact assemblage will be reported in future editions of this Newsletter.

Any variation from the above routine will be noted in the individual reports.

Specific location of sites is not reported herein in order to protect the sites from irresponsible action. Persons who have a valid need for such information can obtain it from TARL.

Some of the reports will amount to little more than a catalogue of artifacts. Often this is <u>all</u> that will <u>ever</u> be known about the site.

Comparison and discussion will be delayed generally until a significant number of sites have been reported.

WHITE OAK BAYOU

White Oak Bayou originates in northwest Harris County, Texas. It flows southeasterly and joins Buffalo Bayou in downtown Houston. Buffalo Bayou flows easterly and is the principle tributary of the San Jacinto River. The San Jacinto River empties into Galveston Bay which is a major estuary on the Gulf of Mexico.

The drainage area of White Oak Bayou consists of 118 square miles. The distance from the head of drainage to the confluence with Buffalo Bayou is about 24 miles. Ground elevation varies from 150 feet above sea level at the head of the stream to 45 at Buffalo Bayou. Water surface is at about 18 feet above sea level at the lower end.

White Oak Bayou is a Holocene-Modern stream that cuts through the deltaic deposits of the late Pleistocene. Average annual rainfall is about 47 inches. During historic times the stream has never run dry. It is fed by rains, springs and sewage treatment plant effluent.

The entire drainage area is within the gulf prairie although it is only a few miles from the southern edge of the pineywoods. Principle vegetation is prairie grass. Timber is confined to the stream banks. Trees, shrubs and vines identified along the bayou include loblolly pine, common bald cypress, giant cane, common greenbriar, eastern cottonwood, black willow, eastern black walnut, pecan, water hickory, American hornbeam, white oak, post oak, willow oak, water oak, southern red oak, sugar hackberry, common hackberry, American elm, winged elm, red mulberry, black mulberry, Osage orange, pokeweed, Carolina snailseed vine, southern magnolia, camphortree, red bay, common sassafras, American sweetgum, sycamore, parsley hawthorn, Texas hawthorn, Carolina cherry laurel, black cherry, dewberry, sweet acacia, honey mesquite, common honey-locust, Drummond's rattlebox, bagpod, eastern coralbean, common hop-tree, Hercules-club prickly-ash, Chinese tallow-tree, cassava, flame-leaf sumac, poison-ivy, youpon holly, possum-haw holly, box-elder maple, Alabama supplejack, heart-leaf ampelopsis, pepper-vine, ivy tree-bine, Virginia creeper, mustang grape, muscadine grape, pinewoods grape, Carolina linden, Drummond's wax-mallow, St. Andrew's cross, Devil's walking-stick, flowering dogwood, rough-leaf dogwood, farkleberry, woolybucket bumelia, common persimmon, Japanese privet, Chinese privet, green ash, American beauty-berry, Texas lantana, cross-vine, trumpet-creeper, southern catalpa, common buttonbush, American elder, Japanese honeysuckle, trumpet honeysuckle, rusty blackhaw, arrow-wood viburnum and eastern baccharis. Some of these plants are recent introductions and others are not plentiful but they demonstrate the productivity of the streamside environment and the resources available.

The White Oak Bayou area may have been traversed by European people during the 16th , 17th and 18th centuries but the impact was minimal until the early part of the 19th century. The Austin Colony included the area. Grants of land on White Oak Bayou were made by the Mexican government prior to 1836 and by the Texas government thereafter. The village of Houston was started at the confluence of White Oak Bayou and Buffalo Bayou in 1836. The prairies were used for farming and grazing. Timber along the streams supplied fuel and building material for the settlers. Railroads were built through the area in the late 19th century.

Urban development in the White Oak Bayou watershed has been increasing in the present century as Houston has grown. At various times the bayou has been altered to improve its capacity for carrying storm water to protect the urban development. At this time the realigned channel has been lined with concrete from Pinemont Street down to Little White Oak Bayou. Other improvements are planned.

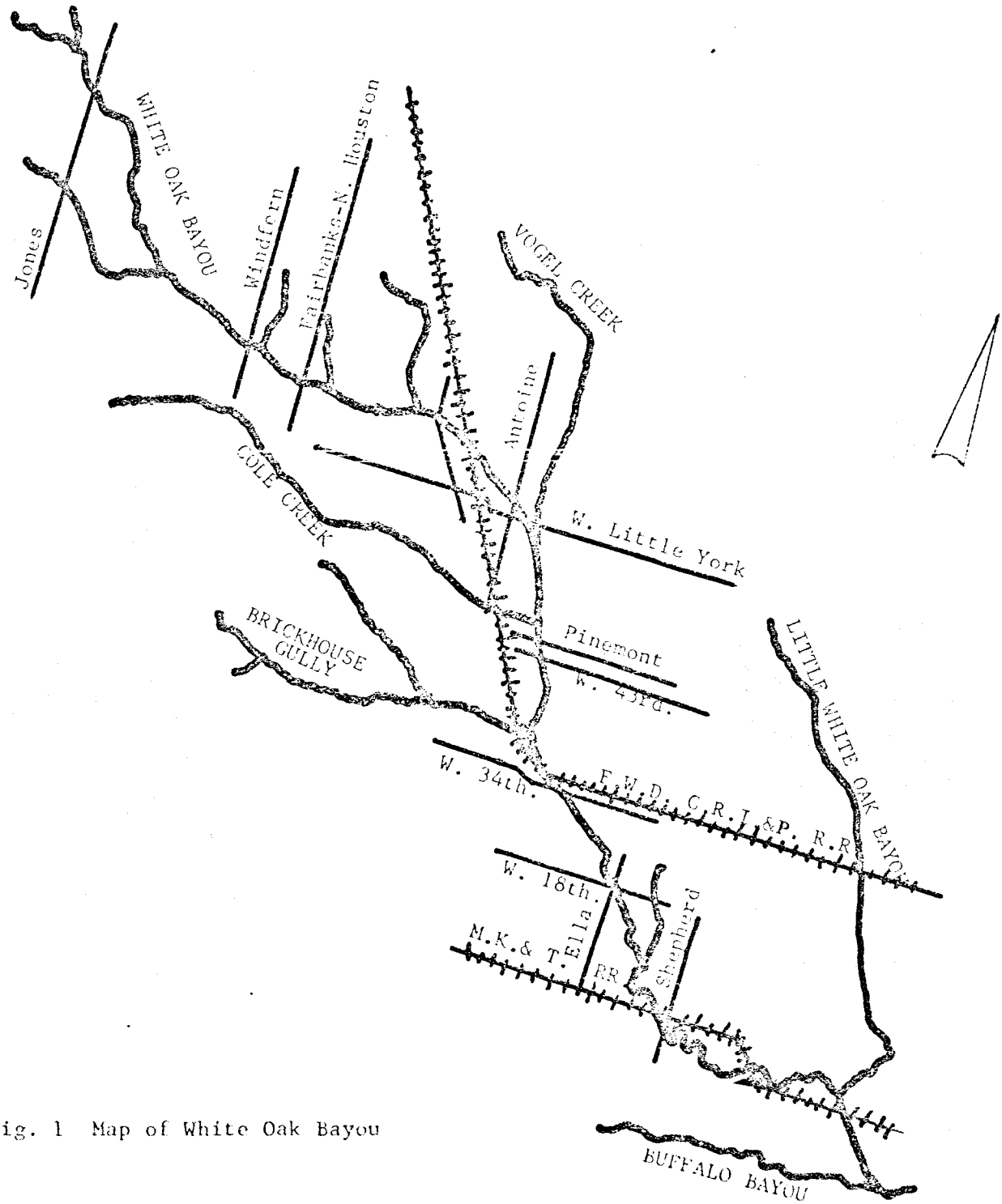


Fig. 1 Map of White Oak Bayou

41 HR 155

This site is located at the position where the new channel of the bayou cuts across a horseshoe bend in the natural stream. The old channel was lined with concrete at its intersection with the new channel. This construction work exposed the natural soil profile and disturbed the overburden. The bed of the old channel is consolidated red silty clay. This material continues above the stream bed for several feet. Above the red material is a light gray sand which extends to the surface topsoil. The contact between the two distinct soils is about 22 feet below the high bank. This level is not consistent throughout the area. Surface elevation is about 61 feet above sea level.

Erosion of the sand and topsoil following construction exposed the material reported herein. The site is on the east side of the natural stream and north of the new channel. It was on the inside of the horseshoe bend. At a point about 12 feet below the surface fragments of bone were found in undisturbed position within the gray sand. Ferrugineous nodules were numerous at the position of the bones. Along the eroding slope down from the bones lithic artifacts were found in disturbed position. No evidence of the site of human occupation was found. The site could have been in either the topsoil or the gray sand. There is no indication that the bones and artifacts were together.

BONE:

Some unidentified fragments of bone were found along with some that could be identified as to the genus of the animal. The identifiable animals are:

Elephas sp. Fragments of enamel plates of elephant tooth.

Bison sp. Fragments of molar teeth M3 of a bison.

Terrapene sp. Fragment of the fourth pleural bone from the right side of the carapace of a box turtle.

The bison teeth were identified by Dr. W.W. Dalquest of Midwestern University. These animals represent two genera of mammals and one genus of reptile that were rather widespread during the Pleistocene Period. The box turtle is common in Harris County today.

LITHICS:

Lithic material recovered includes 22 objects. One of these is a projectile point, one is an end scraper and the rest are flakes and chips.

Projectile Point:

Dart Point:

Unidentified--Stemmed (1) (Figure 2, A.)

The blade is narrow and relatively thick with edges that are slightly convex. The distal third of the blade is sinuous resulting in the tip being twisted 20°. Shoulders are prominent but rounded, not barbed. The dart point can not be classified as to type as most of the stem is missing. Silicified wood.

End Scraper: (1) (Fig. 2, B.)

A small end scraper was made by removal of chips from a thick primary flake. Bit is semicircular with diameter of 12 mm. and working edge of 60°. Flint.

Flakes and Chips:

The remaining 20 stone objects are flakes and chips of flint. Two are primary, seven are secondary and eleven are interior flakes. Three show evidence of fire fracture. One has been modified by shaping retouch. All but one have minute scars indicating use for cutting purposes. Three are lipped flakes. Nine are less than 15mm, seven are between 15 and 20 mm and three are between 20 and 25 mm in width.

41 HR 155

		Utilized				Unutilized				Totals			
Size	Material	P.	S.	I.	total	P.	S.	I.	total	P.	S.	I.	total
0 to 15mm.	Flint	1	1	5	7			1	1	1	1	6	8
15 to 20mm.	Flint		3	6*	9						3	6	9
20 to 25mm.	Flint	1	1	1	3					1	1	1	3
Totals		2	5	12	19			1	1	2	5	13	20

* = 3 are lipped flakes.
Table 1.

The assemblage is rather meager so no conclusions can be reached about the site. However, some factors may be significant There are no ceramics. There is a high percentage of lipped flakes and utilized flakes. The association of the artifacts with the bones of Pleistocene animals is probably fortuitous.

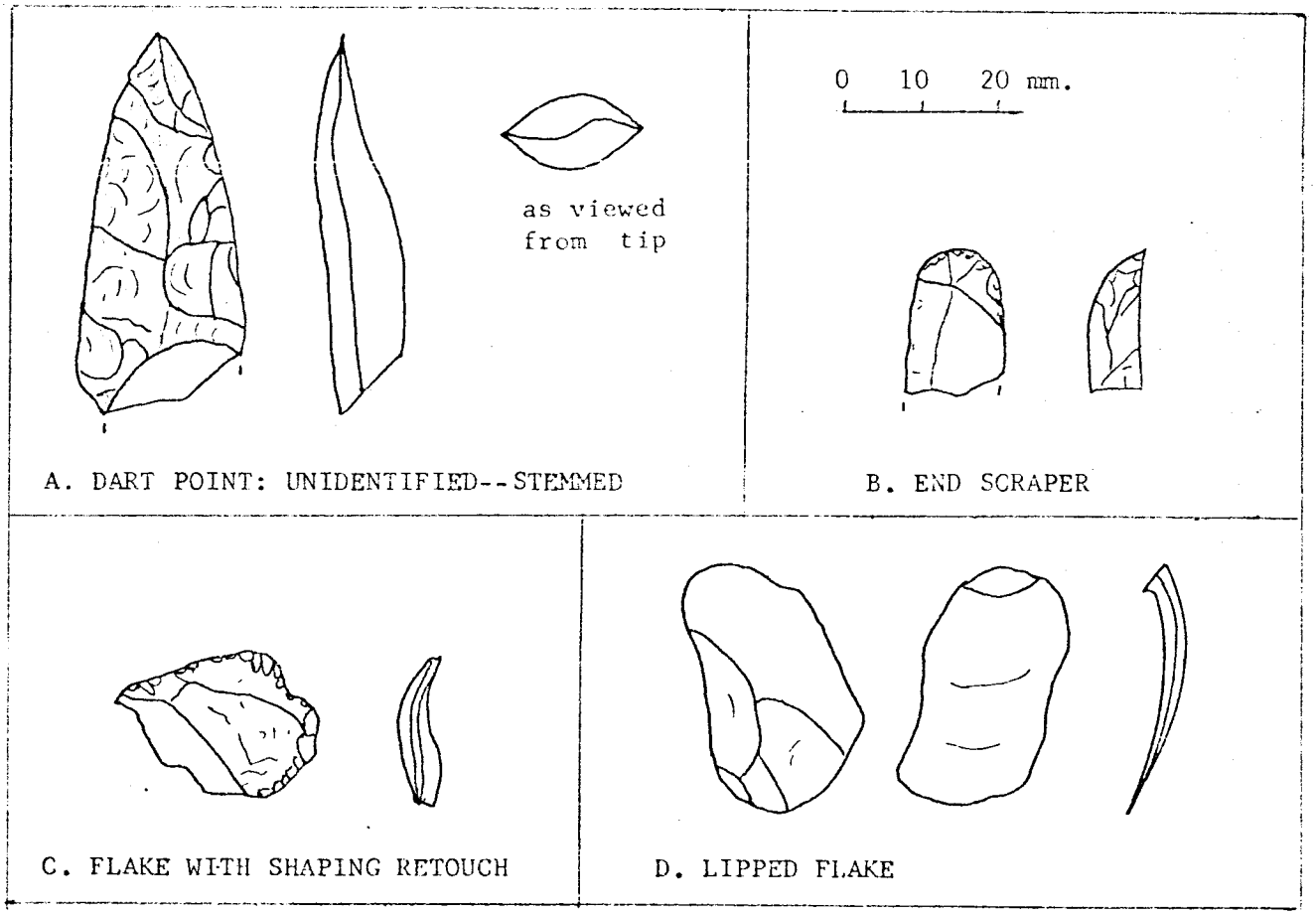


Figure 2.

41 HR 154
This site is on what was apparently a sandy knoll between two minor streams that entered the bayou from the north. Channel realignment and street construction exposed the site by stripping at least one foot of topsoil from the surface. The soil is light gray sand extending to a depth of at least 10 feet. Surface elevation is about 61 feet above sea level.

The site was apparently utilized for concrete batch plant operations or for washing concrete transit mixer trucks as there is a considerable amount of flint gravel scattered over the area. Some of this gravel has adherent concrete and most of it has been through a rock crusher. Because of this condition most of the flint objects were discarded. This will bias the lithic component.

Ceramic and lithic artifacts were found thinly scattered over an area of about 120 feet by 100 feet. Examination of old aerial photographs suggests that the site was originally larger in the north-south dimension.

CERAMICS:
In this report the descriptions used by L.E. Aten in Excavations at the Jamison Site (41 LB 2), Liberty Co., Texas, 1967 will be used unless otherwise indicated.

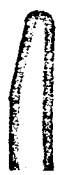
The assemblage includes fragments of pottery which when reassembled as much as convenient resulted in 25 sherds. One sherd is Goose Creek Red-Filmed and the others are Goose Creek Plain. All are eroded and friable.

Goose Creek Plain: (24)
Rim Sherds: One rim sherd is present. Lip is rounded with thinning from both interior and exterior, Type 1. No lip notching. Thickness is 5mm.
Body Sherds: 23 body sherds are present. Thickness varies from 4mm. to 8mm with average of 6mm.

Goose Creek Red-Filmed: (1)
Rim sherds: One rim sherd is present. Lip is rounded with interior thinning, Type 2. No lip notching. Thickness is 6mm. The red film has been applied to both interior and exterior.

Rim Shapes:

Type 1.....
Lip rounded
Interior & exterior thinning



Type 2.....
Lip rounded
Interior thinning

Fig. 3 Rim Shapes

Hereafter in this report, rim shapes will be referenced to these types. New types will be sketched as they first appear in the report.

41 HR 154

LITHICS:
Lithic material retained includes 55 objects. Five of these are projectile points and the others are flakes and chips.

Projectile Points:
Dart Points:
Gary (1) (Fig. 4, A.)
Small. Blade edges are slightly concave. Stem is contracting, rounded and thinned. Shoulders are at right angles to axis. The last chip removed from one shoulder appears to have overshot, making point assymetrical. Silicified wood.

Unidentified--Blade Tip (1) (Fig. 4, B.)
This is the distal tip of an unidentifiable dart point. Blade edges are convex. Cortex remains on one face. Flint.

Arrow Points:
Bassett (1) (Fig. 4, C.)
Small. Blade edges straight with irregular serrations. Barbed. Stem contracting, convex. Barbs and stem same size and shape. Flint.

Unidentified--Type A-1 (1) (Fig. 4, D.)
Blade edges straight, serrated. Barbed. Barbs have been intentionally squared as in Catahoula points. Stem contracting, rounded as in Clifftton points. This is similar to Type A-1 in the Jamison Site assemblage. Uniface. Flint.

Unidentified--Type A-2 (1) (Fig. 4, E.)
Short and broad. Blade edges straight. Barbed. Barbs are rounded. Stem is short with parallel sides and convex base. Flint.

Flakes and Chips:
The remaining 50 stone objects are flakes and chips. Evidence of use is indicated by minute scars on sharp edges on 82%. Two of the small interior flakes have been modified by shaping retouch to produce special shapes that could have been used in compound points, Fig. 4, F. & G.
Other characteristics of the flakes are indicated on the following schedule:

		Utilized				Unutilized				Totals			
		P.	S.	I.	total	P.	S.	I.	total	P.	S.	I.	total
Size	Material												
0 to 15mm.	Flint		8	17	25	1		5*	6	1	8	21	31
	Sil.wood			1	1	1	2		3	1	2	1	4
	total		8	18	26	2	2	5	9	2	10	22	35
15 to 20mm.	Flint	1	2	9	12								12
	Sil.wood												0
	total	1	2	9	12								12
20 to 25mm.	Flint			3	3								3
	Sil.wood												0
	total			3	3								3
Totals		1	10	30	41	2	2	5	9	2	10	22	50

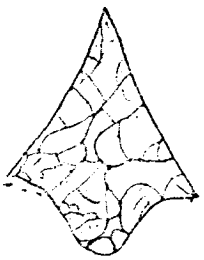
* = one is lipped flake. P.=primary, S.=secondary, I.=interior

Table 2.

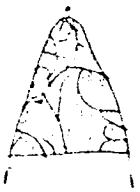
41 HR 154

The Goose Creek Plain pottery as well as the small Gary dart point and the small arrow points indicate that this is a Late Prehistoric occupation site.

DART POINTS:



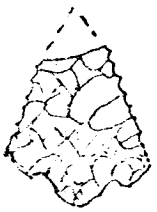
A. GARY



B. UNIDENTIFIED--BLADE TIP

ARROW POINTS:

C. BASSETT



D. UNIDENTIFIED--TYPE A-1

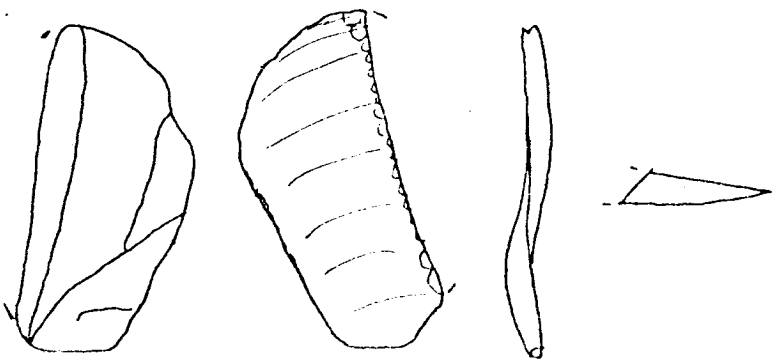
E. UNIDENTIFIED--TYPE A-2

UTILIZED FLAKES:

F.

G.

F. & G. are modified by Shaping Retouch



H. Flake used for cutting and scraping

Items A., B. & E. are in F. W. Goodrum collection.

0 10 20 mm.

Figure 4

41 HR 256
This site was within a horseshoe bend in the bayou and was exposed when realignment of the channel cut through it. The soil below the sandyloam topsoil is a light gray silty sand of unknown depth. About three feet below the surface the soil includes numerous calcareous nodules, some of which are as large as 60 mm. Surface elevation is about 71 feet above sea level.
A few artifacts were exposed by erosion in the topsoil and within the stratum of calcareous nodules. The site extends for about 50 feet along the new cut bank and the north-south dimension is unknown. The surface has been used as a dump for modern cultural debris during this century.

CERAMICS:
Only one fragment of pottery was found. It was near the surface.

Bone Temper: (1)
The sherd is a plain body section having sandy paste and bone temper. The color is reddish; interior and exterior are 10R4/6 and the core is 10YR4/2. It is soft, friable and has eroded so the bone tempering agent is exposed. Bone fragments are as large as 3½ mm. Curvature is slight. Thickness is 5 mm.

LITHICS:
Lithic material includes 17 objects. Three are projectile points and the others are flakes and chips.

Projectile Points:
Dart Points:
Pedernales (1) (Fig. 5, A.)
This is the stem and part of the blade of a typical Pedernales point. Blade edges are convex and suggest that the point had been resharpened. It appears to have had barbs which were broken at the time the tip was lost. Sides of the stem are parallel. The base is concave and has been thinned by removal of large flakes. Patination of the flint has turned the exterior color to a yellowish-orange (10YR8/6). A recent break reveals the point was made from a good quality, dark gray (N3) flint. The point is 5.4 mm. in thickness and chemical alteration has penetrated 1.1 mm on each side. The yellow layer is 0.3 mm. and 0.8 mm. is white and porous. This artifact was found within the stratum of calcareous nodules. The point had been broken by impact before the patination occurred as the surface of the fracture is the same color as the sides of the blade.

Unidentified--Stemmed (1) (Fig. 5, C.)
This is the blade of a small dart point made from silicified wood. Blade edges are convex. Shoulders are rounded, not barbed. The stem is missing. Some patination has occurred. It was found about 2 feet above the caliche.

Unidentified--Expanded Stem (1) (Fig. 5, D.)
This is the stem of a small dart point. Stem is sharply expanded. Base is straight and has been thinned to a sharp edge. Possibly Ellis type.

Flakes and Chips:
The remaining 14 objects are flakes and chips of flint. One is a prismatic blade that is 12 mm. by 44 mm. Edges indicate that it was used for cutting and scraping purposes. Six of the 13 other flakes have been used for cutting also.

41 HR 256

		Utilized				Unutilized				Totals			
Size	Material	P.	S.	I.	total	P.	S.	I.	total	P.	S.	I.	total
0 to 15mm.	Flint		1	3*	4	1	1	5	7	1	2	8	11
15 to 20mm.	Flint			3	3							3	3
Totals			1	6	7	1	1	5	7	1	2	11	14

* one is prismatic blade.
Table 3.

The bone tempered pottery and the Pedernales dart point were not contemporaneous at the site. This bend in the bayou had at least a casual occupation from the Archaic to Late Prehistoric times.

Addendum:
Following a heavy rain, a dart point was found on the concrete lining in the bottom of the bayou one mile downstream of 41 HR 256. At that time the channel was being realigned and the disturbed area extended from Pinemont Street down to the F.W.D. and C.R.I.& P. R.R. If the artifact was not from the site then it did come from nearby.
Pedernales (1) (Fig. 5, B.)
This point is complete and is made from a mottled light gray flint that has irregular patination. Blade edges are convex. Shoulders are nearly square, not barbed. The stem tapers slightly toward the concave base.

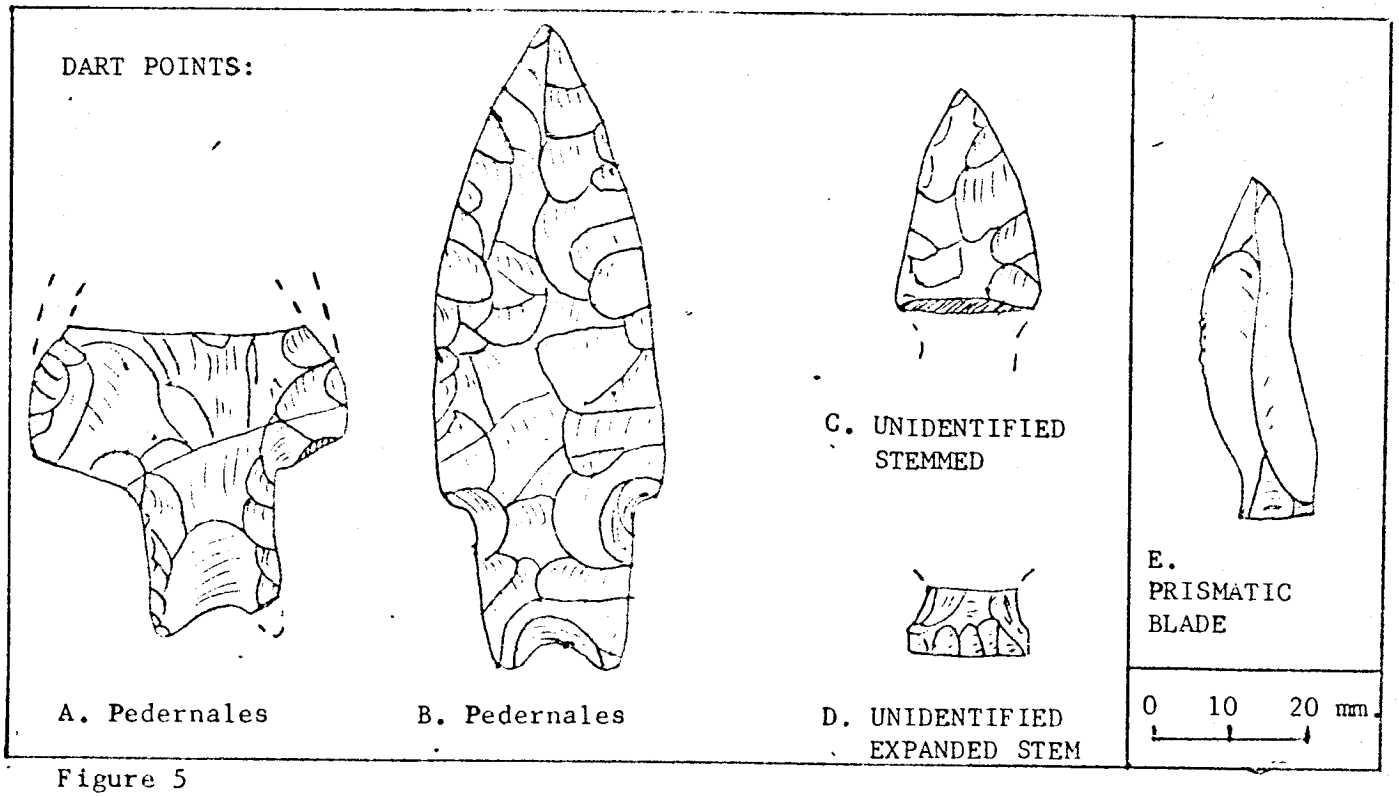


Figure 5

A Two Component Site, 41HR185 - L. W. Patterson

This is a description of a site, 41HR185 in inland Harris County, which has elements of both the Woodland and Late Pre-historic periods. It is located on a high sandy area, about 100 feet from a creek bank, and has seen much abuse in the past by pot hunters.

The Woodland period of perhaps 200 to 600 AD is identified by the presence of pottery and small dart points on this site. A Late Prehistoric element is shown by a Scallorn arrow point, with arrow points arriving after 600 AD (Aten 1971: fig. 10). The material described represents a collection made through the end of 1974.

Non-lithic artifacts consist of the following:

potsherds (over 15 mm square)	23
small bone fragments	18
marine shell fragment	1
clay balls	28

Potsherds are all body sherds of the Goose Creek type, ranging from 5 to 8 mm in thickness, with an average of 6 mm. Two are single line interior incised, and one has a zigzag incised design. The clay balls have rather amorphous shapes ranging from 16 to 35 mm in diameter, and some appear to have been fired. These are common on upper Texas coast sites, such as reported by Aten (1967:39) and Shafer (1968:74). As an interesting comparison, Morse and Tesar (1974:104) mention that clay balls continue through the late Woodland period in the Mississippi Valley, with possible use for cooking.

The lithic flake collection is as follows:

15 to 20 mm (square)	194
20 to 25 mm	26
25 to 35 mm	21
over 35 mm	1

Included in the above are 12 gravers and 3 notched tools. Some of the lithic artifacts are shown in Figure 1. In addition, there are 7 possible burin spalls, including one with a retouched end. Several hundred pieces of fine chipping debris were found. Flint flakes are all single colors, and include red jasper, light tan, medium brown, dark brown, light grey, and dark grey. There is evidence of heat treating on several flakes. As I have previously noted (Patterson 1974), flake tools were becoming increasingly smaller during this time period. Eight miscellaneous flake cores and 4 pieces of burnt rock were found.

Seventy-seven prismatic blades and blade-like flakes were found, ranging in width from 5 to 19 mm. There was also one blade core trimming flake and several of the blades have ground edges at the striking platform. Retouched unifacial flakes are also present, including 11 unifacial points and 5 possible side-blades, perhaps used as hafted tools or arrow points. No blade cores were found, although a number occur at nearby sites.

Bifacial lithic material consists of 2 miscellaneous bifacial fragments, 2 unclassified dart point fragments, 1 Scallorn arrow point, 1 small Gary dart point, and 1 small Kent or possibly Yarbrough dart point.

The material found on this site is felt to be typical of this general area, for the time periods represented. Scallorn arrow points may occur early in the Late Prehistoric period (Suhm and Jelks 1962:285). Use of this

site could be from the late Woodland period through the early Late Prehistoric period, of roughly 500 to 1000 AD. This is probably a hunting and gathering type campsite, with a significant amount of flint chipping occuring at the site.

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Aten, L.E. 1971 Archeological Excavations at the Dow-Cleaver Site, Texas Archeological Salvage Project, Tech. Bulletin No. 1.

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Site 41HR185 Artifacts Actual Size