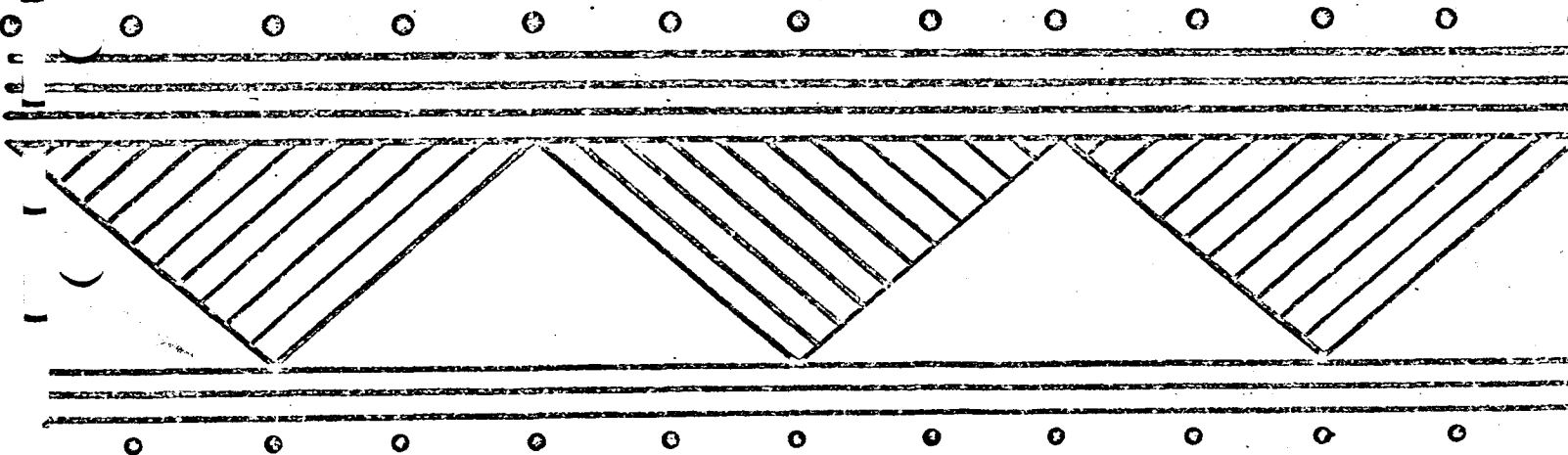


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The East Bay Sites (Chambers County, Texas)

Alan R. Duke

East Bay, an arm of Galveston Bay, is bounded on the south by Bolivar Peninsula and on the north by Chambers County. The shores of East Bay and its environs supported a large Indian population in prehistoric times as evidenced by the number of shell sites found in the area. A short distance inland, major occupation sites are found on Lake Surprise, Lake Wallis and Stevenson Lake. These shallow lake sites are intriguing, to say the least, but the information presented here concerns only the sites on the north shore of East Bay directly south of Lake Surprise.

Environment

Most of the sites are within 100-200 yards of the bay. Elevation is only one to three feet above sea level and the entire area is flooded during abnormally high tides and, of course, during hurricanes and heavy rains. Several high shell mounds in the area may have provided refuge for the prehistoric inhabitants during flood periods.

Shellfish, particularly the Rangia clam, were probably the main attraction for the aborigines. Oysters were also found and certainly crabs, fish and crayfish were present as they are today. Alligator teeth, deer and other animal bone found on the surface of the sites indicates utilization of reptiles and animals for food. Waterfowl, skunk, quail, herons, snakes and turtles are abundant in the area today.

Plant life generally is limited at present to salt grass, a few oak trees, and various marsh plants and grasses.

The ambient temperatures in the area range normally from the occasional low in the mid-twenties during December thru February to the high nineties during the summer months. These extremes, along with the countless mosquitoes residing there most of the year must have made life very uncomfortable a good portion of the year.

Artifacts

Pottery

The sherds found eroding out of the East Bay sites can be categorized as sand tempered, bone tempered and grog tempered. The accepted general typology, San Jacinto Plain, Goose Creek Plain and Goose Creek Incised can be used to classify these sherds even though some minor differences are evident. Only 7 out of 150 sherds examined were incised and these were Goose Creek. San Jacinto Plain sherds accounted for about 10% of the total.

Vessel shape appears to conform to normal Goose Creek styling with the usual heavy knode at the bottom of the bowl and a slight outward flare on the lip. Incising and lip notching follows the usual Goose Creek patterns. Coarse wiping marks are evident on the interior side of several sherds.

Lithic Material

Lithic artifacts are not abundant on these sites. 25 arrowpoints, 7 perforators (drills?), 9 scrapers and 3 knives have been found. A reasonable number of worked flakes were present (250). Perhaps the most striking features of this lithic material is the size and nature of the artifacts. First,

perforators and scrapers appear abundantly in relation to the total number of lithic pieces. All the scrapers are small (several almost too small to rasp) and several perforators are tiny also as compared to the usual types found in coastal sites. (See sketches). Second, two of the knives are small, fragile and unique in shape (microflints?). Third, four of the less common, small, long stemmed Perdiz points were found. These particular points are not in evidence on most of the upper Texas coast sites and appear to reflect a somewhat rare flint working trait.

No large projectile point, knives or other flint artifacts have been located to date. Aside from a few pieces of quartzite and petrified wood, all lithic material is flint.

Bone and Shell Material

Worked bone artifacts are scarce. Only 3 bone awls (none complete) have been located. Deer bone, bird bones, gar scales and alligator teeth are present. Several human teeth were found.

One piece of cut conch shell has been located. Perforated shells, though common on Galveston Bay Phase sites, were not found.

Conclusions

Much work is required in this area. Analysis of surface material leads to the conclusion that these are Galveston Bay Phase sites of fairly recent occupation (AD 1100 to AD 1700). Excavation will be required to further define the sites and tie them in with sites close by at Wallisville, Smith Point, Caplen and High Island.

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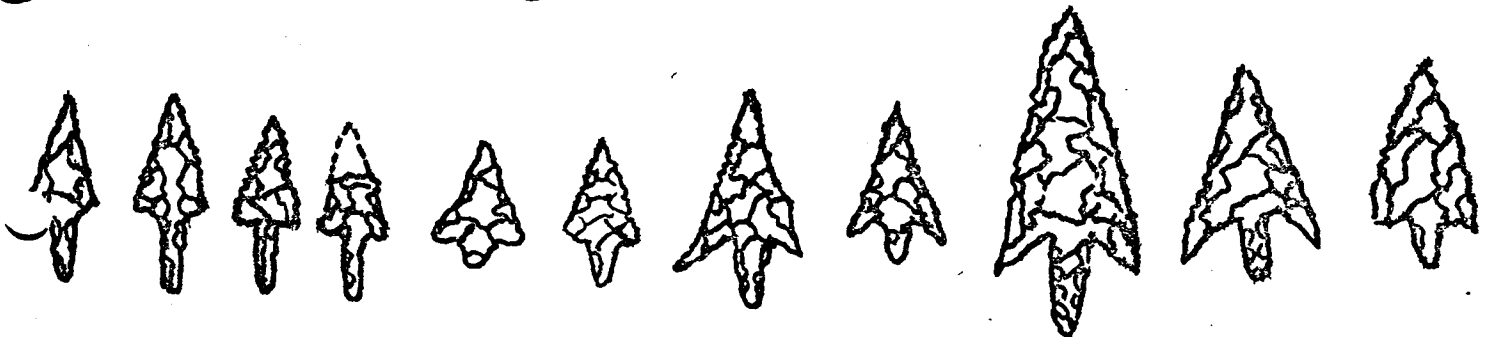
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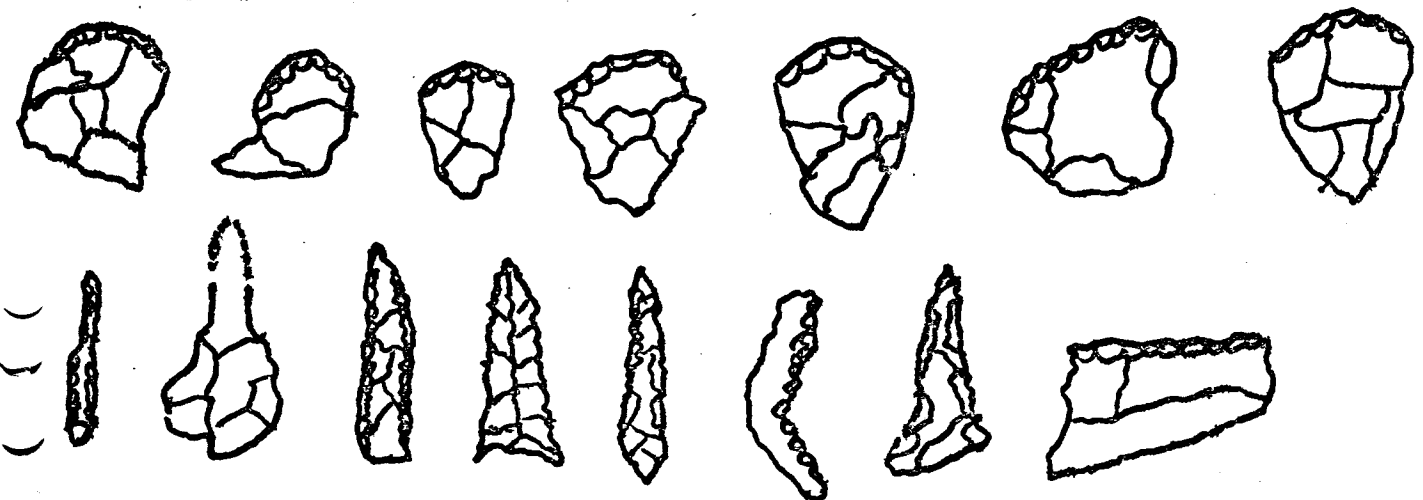
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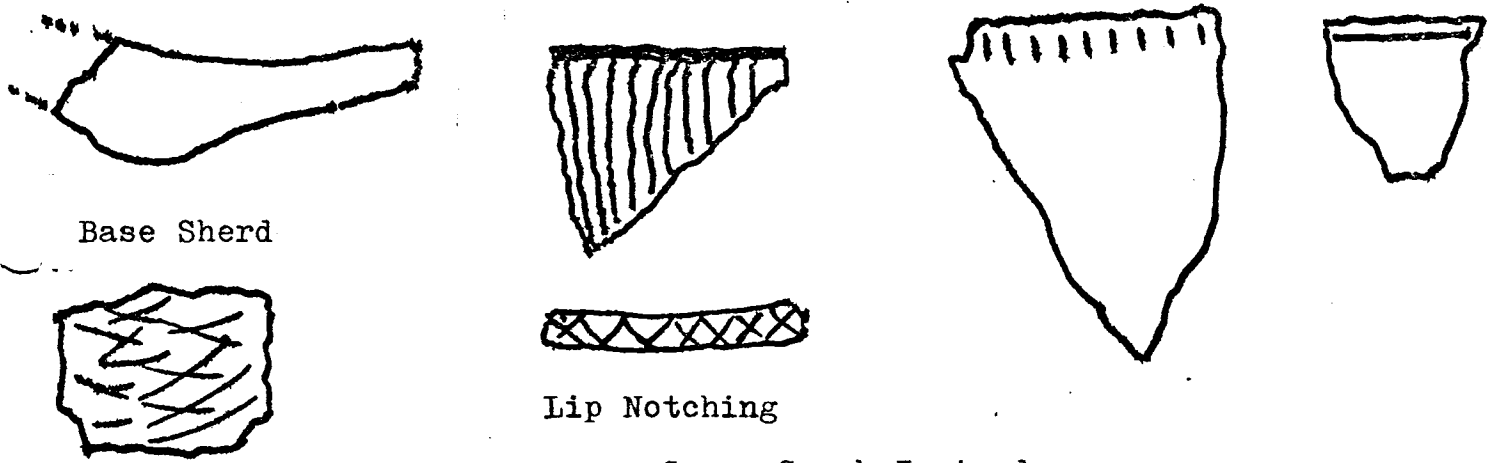
Arrowpoints



Scrapers, Perforators and Knives



Pottery



Base Sherd

Lip Notching

Wipe Marks

Goose Creek Incised