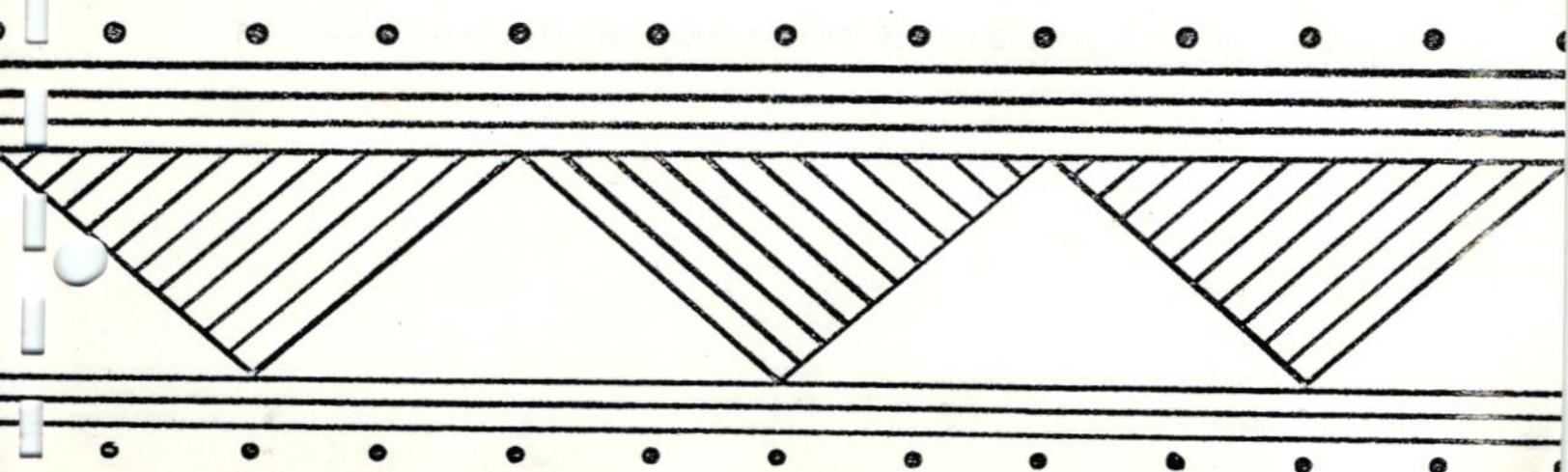


HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 65

DECEMBER 1979



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 - Alan R. Duke, 1706 Oaks Drive, Pasadena, Texas 77502.

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Chairman - Texas Anderson, 807 Glenchester, Houston, Texas 77074 - 465-4043
Sec.-Treas. - Jean McGinty, Rt. 2, Box 617, Dayton, Texas 77535 - 576-2378
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Activities - 1979-80

- December 10, 1979 - Houston Archeological Society laboratory work session. Room 376, C&O Building, University of Houston - 7:30 - 10:00 P.M.
- January 16-18 - Texas Historical Foundation - Historical Methodology Seminar, Houston, Texas.
- March, 1980 - "Odyssey", a series on anthropology and archeology, presented by the Public Broadcasting Service, will run for 13 weeks starting in March 1980.

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ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEYS AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS ON THE UPPER TEXAS COAST

L. W. Patterson

INTRODUCTION

The importance of regional settlement patterns has been recognized for some time in the literature. However, few detailed regional settlement pattern studies are currently available. I feel that this is due mainly to lack of intensive uniform surveys, lack of detailed site reporting and a surprising lack of interest in developing regional syntheses. This article will present some general considerations for settlement pattern studies, discussion of the upper Texas coast, and some recommendations for further survey work. Work on regional surveys by amateur archeologists is very important in establishing adequate data bases. Due to limited funds available, professional organizations will probably never be able to provide detailed surveys for complete regions.

Detailed regional survey data can be useful for the following types of studies:

1. Overall regional syntheses
2. Detailed chronological sequences
3. Predictive models for survey work
4. Subsistence patterns
5. Cultural patterns
6. Demographic estimates
7. Trade and diffusion patterns
8. Seasonal occupation models

Of course, regional settlement patterns are only a portion of total regional syntheses. However, intensive surveys to establish settlement patterns generate valuable data for many of the above types of studies. Morse (1975) presents a good example of using this type of data to formulate a regional chronological sequence in eastern Arkansas.

The increased activity in contract archeology for environmental impact work has led to increased interest in regional settlement studies (McGimsey and Davis 1977:59, Schiffer and Gumerman 1977), especially to develop predictive models for contract survey work, as well as to generate research data. In many cases, data from contract surveys is of limited research value due to lack of detailed investigations (Patterson 1978). Also, contract archeology reports for environmental impact work generally have regional summaries of the standard "boiler plate" type, that contribute little to increased available information. In other words, it appears to me that the majority of contract type surveys locate a significant number of new sites, but with little detailed information. This is mainly because the main goal of archeological studies for environmental impact work is to avoid damage to cultural resources, rather than to do detailed studies.

SAMPLING CONSIDERATIONS

For the average amateur archeologist, with limited available time, the best course of action is to simply report as many archeological sites for state records as can be found, in as much detail as possible. It is also important to publish information to assure its general availability. People with more interest in regional surveys, however, will give consideration to types of sampling in survey designs. The literature is full of articles on various sampling designs, such as selective quadrants, random patterns, linear transects, etc. See Mueller (1974)

for a detailed discussion of mathematical sampling design. None of the sampling designs seems to have a great demonstrated advantage, as long as there is fairly uniform coverage of study areas. Plog (1976:157) states that "It has been shown that no sampling design provides precision in estimation which varies significantly less than other designs with changes in settlement pattern or settlement size." Malouf, Baskin and Killen (1977:89-101) support a judgmental sampling design, based on information available for an area and some use of statistics. The important thing is that some type of methodical survey design is being used. Initial field sampling results can be used to improve the plan. In fact, it should be anticipated that some survey plan adjustments will be required during the actual work.

It is probably not possible to obtain a uniform, unbiased regional survey, but an attempt should be made to obtain the best possible regional sample. Bias in regional surveys occurs for several reasons. Current work by professionals is largely for environmental impact studies, where survey locations are selected by non-archeological considerations. Some types of sites, such as shell middens, are easier to locate so that a disproportionate number may be found. Small sites are often difficult to find, even though important to overall survey information. A major factor for sampling bias is that all land is normally not accessible. In urban areas, there is much land where archeological resources have already been destroyed. This can also occur in deep plowed farm areas or where severe soil erosion has occurred.

There is always a question as to how much data is required to obtain a really representative regional sample. No precise answer exists, as it is never known what percentage of existing sites have been found. I recall one example where I surveyed a likely area 20 times before finding the first archeological site. While no precise statistical criteria can be developed to judge survey results, relative confidence does increase as more sites are found in a given area. Survey results can vary considerably with the type of current floral ground cover. In any event, an estimate of site density is necessary to judge if a sample is adequate on a relative statistical basis.

The quality of data can be as important as the quantity. It does little good to find large numbers of archeological sites, if site types cannot be classified. Survey summaries should concentrate on the sites with data of real significance, rather than numerical tabulations of little value.

DEMOGRAPHY

Estimates of aboriginal population quantities are extremely difficult to make, and calculation results are always open to question. As mentioned before, there is no way to closely estimate what percentage of total occupation sites have been located in an area. It is also difficult to estimate how many people occupied a given site at a specific time. Even more important, at present there is no way to judge how many sites were actually concurrent. No absolute dates are available for most archeological sites, and even radiocarbon dating is only accurate to a few hundred years. By the way, the date range given with a radiocarbon date represents one standard deviation. For high statistical confidence, this range should be doubled.

Because of difficulties mentioned here, my own personal preference is to avoid prehistoric demographic studies, and instead concentrate on archeological problems that can be answered with available data. Many archeological reports suffer because much work has been done on questions that cannot be answered with available data. It is possible to obtain relative site density patterns for various chronological periods without struggling with problems of absolute demography.

SITE DISTRIBUTION ON THE UPPER TEXAS COAST

Archeological site distribution can be highly variable for the following reasons:

1. heavier use of some types of ecological areas
2. the amount of survey work that has been done in an area
3. the relative difficulty in finding different types of sites, in various ecological areas

In 1973, Elton Prewitt compiled maps of Texas showing density and distribution of known archeological sites, shown here as Figures 1 and 2. It may be seen that there are clusters of sites in specific areas. I feel that these site concentrations are due to the above reasons.

The density of known archeological sites on the upper Texas coast is summarized in Table 1, using TARL data from the end of 1977. A breakdown of site densities by time periods for this region will be given in a future publication (Patterson n.d.). The average density of archeological sites on the upper Texas coast is one site per 10.6 square miles, but this varies from 2.8 to 128.1 square miles per site for the 20 individual counties. I have surveyed a 10 square mile area on a bayou system in Harris County (Patterson 1976) where the site density is over 5 sites per square mile.

Most sites on the upper Texas coast have been found near some body of water, even if only a small former creek bed. Therefore, people tend to look for sites near water, with good success. What hasn't been done is to survey much other land not adjacent to water. On broad floodplains, sites can be quite distant from the actual stream bed, even though somewhat associated with a specific stream. Fort Bend County has some good examples of this, with sites on higher ground 1 to 2 miles from the present stream bed.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN MODELS

Settlement patterns can be studied on a variety of levels. The simplest is general site density. This can be refined to show site densities at various time periods. It is common to develop settlement patterns for each time period in relation to available natural resources by types of ecological zones occupied.

There are several types of functional settlement models that can be considered based on behavioral patterns. Skinner and Connors (1979:13-16) have outlined some possibilities for Texas hunting and gathering cultures. The problem is that these models are difficult to demonstrate with actual archeological data. For example, there are still no detailed studies demonstrating seasonal rounds in subsistence patterns on the upper Texas coast. This is a future research goal. Functional models of plant food use are not available on the Texas coast because of the lack of plant remains. Functional models of hunting behavior are also difficult to demonstrate on the upper Texas coast. Little evidence of specialized kill and butchering sites has been found, because these types of sites inherently leave so few remains. Also, no evidence has been presented yet for major patterns using base camps with short-term satellite hunting camps.

The relationships between subsistence and settlement patterns on the upper Texas coast remain vague, except on a general basis. Coastal margin sites generally show adaptation to marine resources and inland sites demonstrate a generalized hunting and gathering pattern. Settlement patterns as functional models of detailed behavioral patterns have yet to be demonstrated in this region, although this is certainly subject to future research.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

This article has been aimed at creating interest by amateur archeologists in performing detailed regional surveys. As mentioned in the Introduction, this is one of the most valuable contributions that serious amateurs can make to archeology. Indeed, it is probably the only way in which detailed surveys will ever be made of some areas. To be of value, however, high quality work must be done.

It is important to properly record sites with the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory for the master state records. Site reports should be made in as much detail as possible (Patterson 1979). Site reports are not very useful if diagnostic details are not reported. Your site reports may be the only recorded information ever made for some sites, especially in areas where sites are being rapidly destroyed.

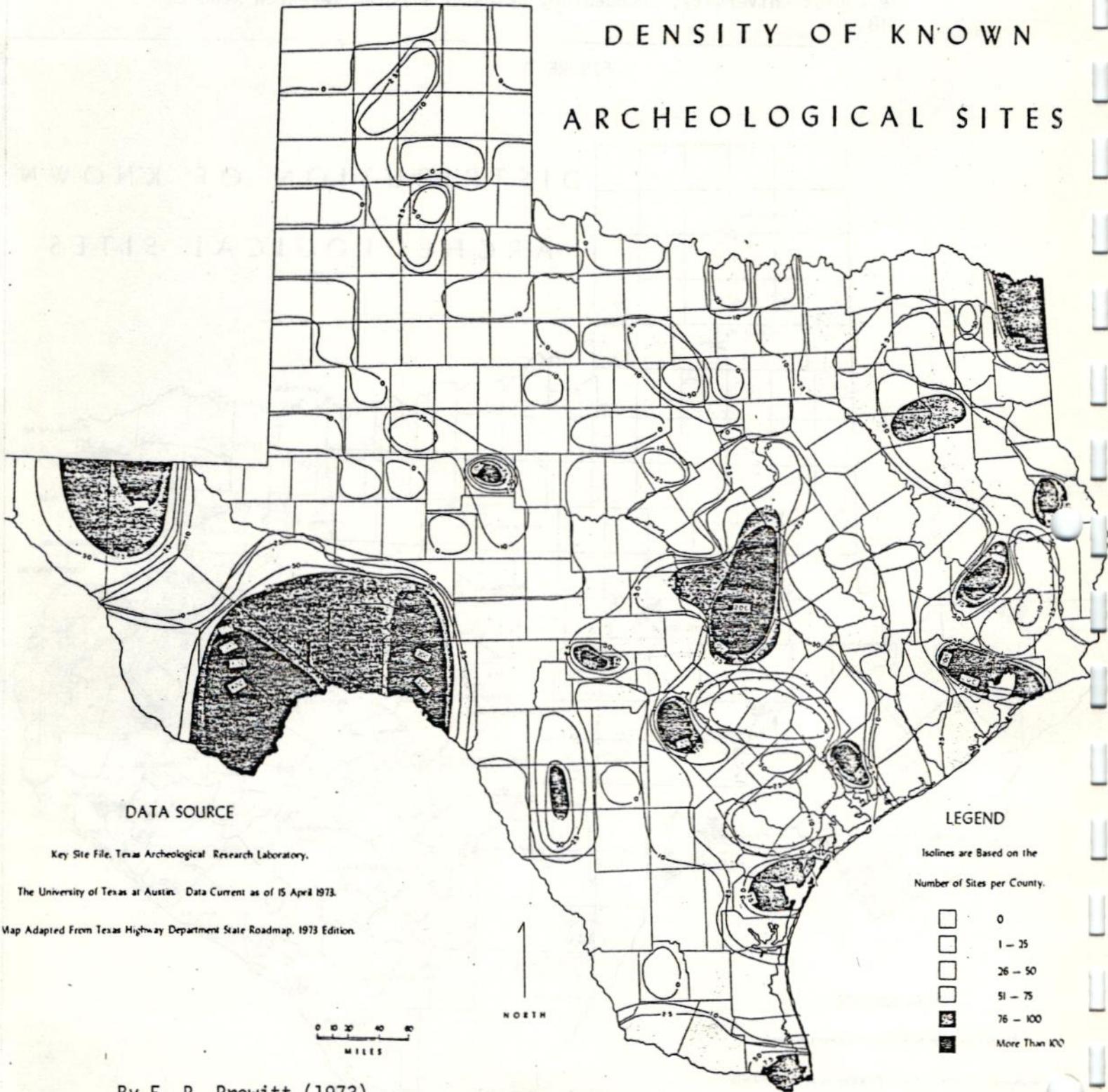
Where possible, it is also important to publish site reports so that information can fully enter the public domain and be easily available. For the upper Texas coast and adjacent areas, the Houston Archeological Society Newsletter is an ideal vehicle for this. It is not necessary to be an experienced writer before considering publication of survey results. There are a number of HAS members who can aid less experienced individuals in recording and publishing archeological site surveys. There is a great need for large quantities of high quality basic data to supply the needs of detailed regional studies.

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FIGURE 2

DENSITY OF KNOWN ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES



DATA SOURCE

Key Site File, Texas Archeological Research Laboratory.

The University of Texas at Austin. Data Current as of 15 April 1973.

Map Adapted From Texas Highway Department State Roadmap, 1973 Edition.

LEGEND

Isolines are Based on the
Number of Sites per County.

-  0
-  1 - 25
-  26 - 50
-  51 - 75
-  76 - 100
-  More Than 100

By E. R. Prewitt (1973)

TABLE I

AREAS OF COUNTIES ON THE UPPER TEXAS COAST

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>NO. OF RECORDED SITES (A)</u>	<u>AREA, SQ. MILES</u>	<u>SQ. MILES/SITE</u>
Austin	47	663	14.1
Brazoria	111	1,423	12.8
Chambers	223	616	2.8
Fort Bend	20	869	43.5
Galveston	67	399	6.0
Grimes	88	801	9.1
Hardin	7	897	128.1
Harris	313	1,723	5.5
Jasper	66	907	13.7
Jefferson	47	951	20.2
Liberty	37	1,180	31.9
Montgomery	49	1,090	22.2
Newton	63	949	15.1
Orange	78	359	4.6
Polk	167	1,100	6.6
San Jacinto	161	624	3.9
Tyler	19	919	48.4
Walker	50	790	15.8
Waller	13	509	39.2
Washington	<u>15</u>	<u>594</u>	<u>39.6</u>
	1,641	17,363	10.6

(A) - TARL files at end of 1977

White Oak Bayou continued from HAS Newsletter No. 64 W.L. McClure

41 HR 279-A (continued)

LITHICS:

Unmodified Pebbles:

The collection includes 104 unmodified pebbles weighing 240 grams. There is no indication of use. Edges are rounded. Material is quartzite and flint. Size varies from 5 to 30 mm.

Modified Pebbles:

The collection includes 22 modified pebbles weighing 270 grams. These pebbles have one or more fracture faces. Three may be heat fractures and the others are percussion breaks. There is no indication of use. Some may be cores. Material is flint, quartzite and silicified wood. Size varies from 10 to 45 mm.

Hammerstone:

A quartzite hammerstone weighs 228 grams. Size is 45 by 90 mm. Both ends show indications of use as a hammer. The surface has calcium carbonate on all sides.

Chopper: (Figure 37, A.)

One quartzite cobble has been modified by removal of several flakes from each side at one end. The edge shows some indication of use. Weight is 160 grams. Size is 40 by 190 mm.

Bifaces:

Five irregularly worked bifaces weigh 40 grams. No indications of intended use are apparent. Size varies from 20 to 45 mm. Three are silicified wood and two are flint.

Two Stage 'D' Bifaces weigh 36 grams. These were apparently intended to be projectile points but poor quality of the flint prevented adequate thinning. Lengths are 38 and 43 mm. Width of each is 30 mm. One was in fire after flaking.

Projectile Points:

The collection includes 35 projectile points or parts thereof. One is an arrow point and 34 are dart points.

Lange: (1) (Figure 37, B.)

This point is made of heat-treated grey flint that is not of local origin. It appears to have been made from a prismatic blade. Weight is 7.9 grams.

Possible Langtry: (2) (Figure 37, C. & D.)

These two points are made of heavily patinated dark brown flint that is not of local origin. Item C is nearly complete and weighs 5.6 grams. Item D was reshaped after the patination occurred but enough of the previous shape is evident to suggest that it was once very similar to Item C. Item D was broken after reshaping and weighs 4.1 grams.

41 HR 279-A

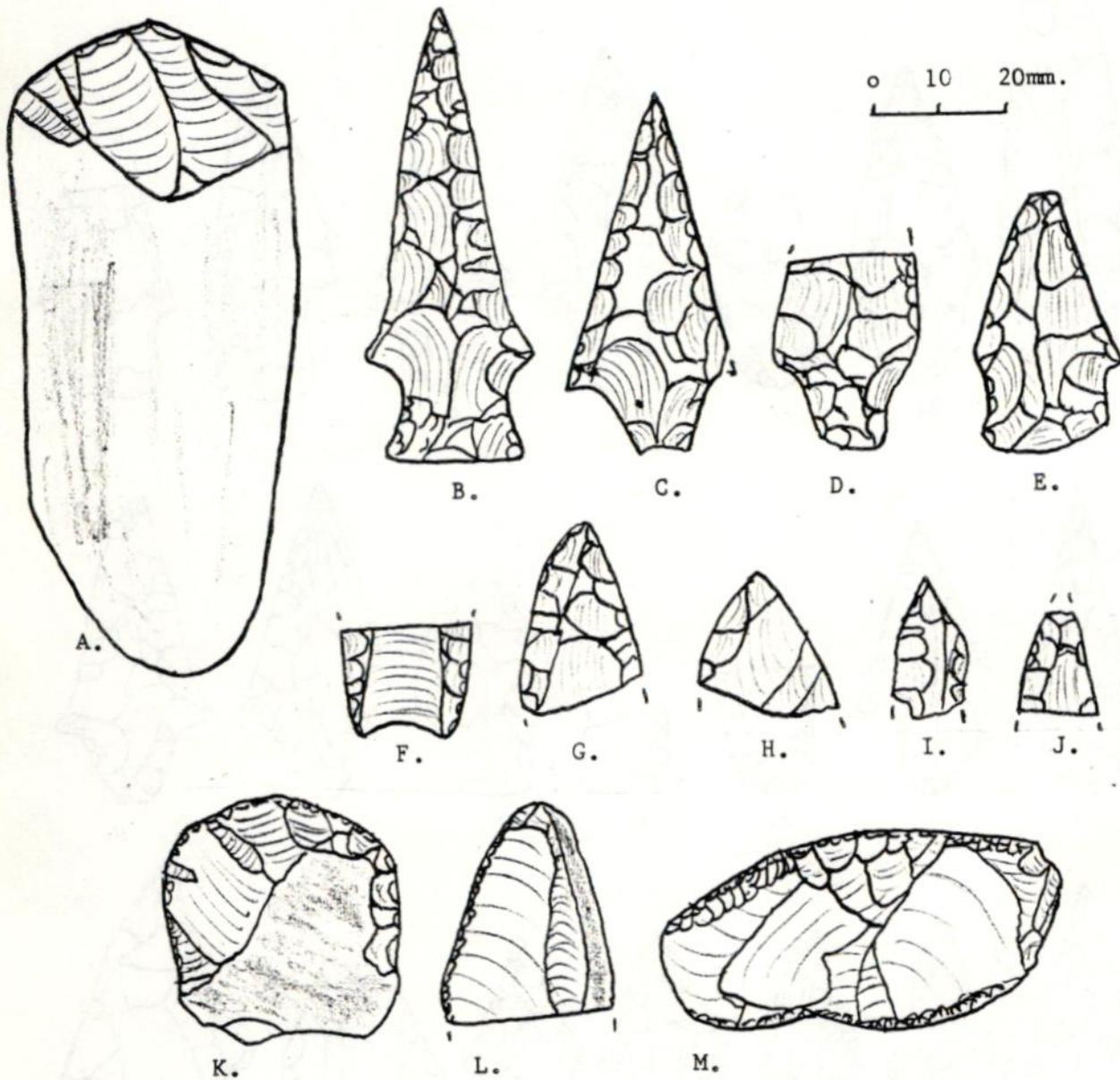


Figure 37

Trinity: (1) (Figure 36, E.)

This point is made of silicified wood. Cortex remains on one side. Weight is 6.4 grams.

Pedernales: (1) (Figure 36, F.)

The stem of a Pedernales point weighs 2.1 grams. Light brown flint.

41 HR 279-A

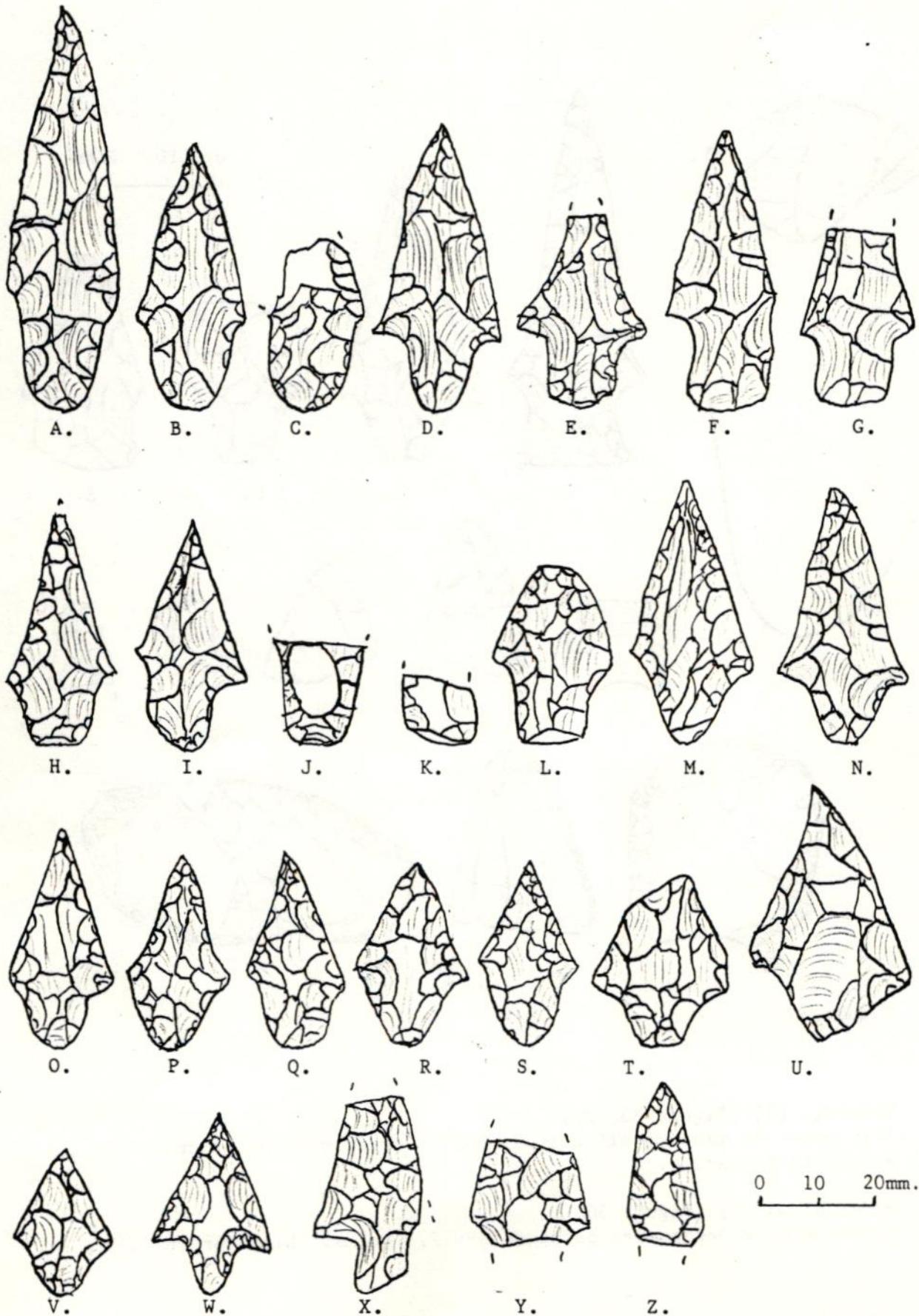


Figure 38

WOB-88

41 HR 279-A

Kent: (12) (Figure 38, A. to L.)

The shape of these points varies from those that approach the Wells type to those that are near the Gary type. Item K. has asphalt on the stem. Item J. has been fire popped after being broken. Item B. has several spots of caliche on each face. Item L. was resharpened to a convex distal end. Three are silicified wood and 7 are flint. Weight of complete points varies from 3.7 to 12.4 grams. Total weight is 59.6 grams.

Gary: (10) (Figure 38, M. to V.)

These points fit the general description of the Gary type. Item U. weighs 10 grams and was discarded due to failure to be thinned properly. Four are silicified wood and 6 are flint. Weight of complete points varies from 2.0 to 6.2 grams. Total weight is 43.5 grams.

Unidentified-Stemmed: (3) (Figure 38, X. to Z.)

These points are not complete enough to classify. Item X. may be a Kent point but the stem is narrower than usual. Total weight is 9.3 grams.

Unidentified-Distal Part: (4) (Figure 37, G. to J.)

Three of these broken points are flint and one is silicified wood. Total weight is 7.9 grams.

Perdiz: (1) (Figure 38, W.)

This arrow point was made from a flint flake and has little modification of the ventral face. Weight is 1.3 grams.

Unifaces: (3) (Figure 37, K.L.M.)

Three unifacial flint tools were found. Item K. is a semicircular scraper made on a secondary flake. The bit angle is 65°. Thickness is 12 mm. Weight is 17.2 grams. Item L. is a side scraper made on a secondary flake. Thickness is 5 mm. Weight is 4.5 grams. The entire periphery of Item M. has been retouched and used as a scraper. Thickness is 4 mm. Weight is 9.3 grams.

Flakes and Chips:

The collection includes 670 flakes and chips. One hundred eighty-eight (28%) are silicified wood and the rest are flint. Total weight is 440 grams. Ten percent are larger than 15 mm. wide. Eleven have fire pops. Two are lipped flakes.

Use scars are found on 139 (21%). Most of these (98) are minute scars such as would be produced by cutting. Twenty-nine were used as thin flake scrapers. Shaping retouch has produced distinct edges on 12 flakes. Of these, 5 are straight, 3 are concave and 4 are convex. One probable burin was found.

A tabulation of the characteristics of flakes and chips is shown in Table 18.

DISCUSSION:

This site was primarily occupied during the Woodland period. This is shown by the preponderance of Kent and Gary dart points and the Goose Creek pottery. Casual occupation by people of the Archaic period from Central Texas and perhaps further southwest is indicated by the Peder-nales, Lange and Langtry points. The Perdiz arrow point and the small proportion of San Jacinto pottery indicates a brief occupation during the Late Prehistoric period.

41 HR 279-A

Deer, bison, turtle and possibly snails and mussels are the only indicated food items. Features #1 and #2 indicate different techniques of cooking. There was a change in the stream bed during the occupation and Feature #2 is definitely earlier than Feature #1. The uncertainty as to time required for channel change and fill inhibits decisions about relative age. Feature #1 may be associated with the Late Prehistoric period. The presence of caliche in the soil and on some of the artifacts may be the geologic clue that will help date the site.

Ten kilograms of sherds give some evidence of the variety of treatment of rims, bases, decoration, and body shapes in Goose Creek wares. The range of size and shape within the Kent and Gary points may reveal changes with time or may indicate that these characteristics were not of much concern.

The relatively small average size of flakes and the small number of discrete tools compared to the projectile points may be characteristic of the Woodland culture in this area.

The bone-ceramic object is an enigma. The decoration of some of the pottery and the deliberate alteration of the broken sherd show some concern with aspects of life other than mere subsistence.

Careful excavation, rather than excavation by erosion, is needed to determine if any stratification exists that separates any of the characteristics of the site.

Size	Material	Utilized				Unutilized				Totals			
		P.	S.	I.	total	P.	S.	I.	total	P.	S.	I.	total
0 to 10mm.	flint		8	8	16	11	56	164	231	11	64	172	247
	sil.wood		3	4	7	5	22	56	83	5	25	60	90
	total		11	12	23	16	78	220	314	16	89	232	337
10 to 15mm.	flint	1	12	43	56	15	59	53	127	16	71	96	183
	sil.wood		6	19	25	8	14	36	58	8	20	55	83
	total	1	18	62	81	23	73	89	185	24	91	151	266
15 to 20mm.	flint		8	14	22	3	10	7	20	3	18	21	42
	sil.wood		3	4	7	1	2	4	7	1	5	8	14
	total		11	18	29	4	12	11	27	4	23	29	56
20 to 25mm.	flint		3	1	4	1	2	2	5	1	5	3	9
	sil.wood			1	1							1	1
	total		3	2	5	1	2	2	5	1	5	4	10
25 to 30mm.	flint			1	1							1	1
Totals		1	43	95	139	44	165	322	531	45	208	417	670

Table 18. Flakes and Chips

41AS78 Revisited - 50 Years LaterA. R. Duke and B. R. Duke

A prominent V-shaped bluff is formed by the confluence of the Aransas River and the Playa Ladosa arm of Copano Bay in Aransas County, Texas. Martin and Potter recorded this bluff as a site in their privately published 1929 report. As stated in their report, the site extended along the Playa Ladosa banks for about a mile, and then turned and ran along the high land at the edge of the Aransas River for about one-half mile.

Permission was granted to survey this area by Mr. H. Gorman Ritchie, Jr. Surveys were conducted in August, 1979. 41AS78 is approximately one mile north of the La Playa Ladosa site (41SP112, see HAS Newsletter No. 64). It is also only about 1-1/2 miles from the main body of Copano Bay. The dimensions of the site were determined to be only half those reported by Martin and Potter on the Playa Ladosa side. On the other hand, the site was found to extend up the Aransas River for about a mile.

On the Playa Ladosa side of the site, a multitude of whole oyster shells, flint flakes, and conch and whelk columella were scattered evenly across the face of the bluff. Quite a number of scallop shells were also present. This side of the site was heavily eroded. Perhaps the most striking facet of this portion of the site was the prolificity of columella. A few projectile points and pottery sherds were found.

The Aransas River side of the site also exhibited severe erosion, but some stratification was evident at the upper end of the site. The site at this location exhibited mainly broken oyster shells and flint flakes. Sherds of pottery were found as well as a few projectile points.

Probably the most unique find at the site was made on the Aransas River side about 100 yards from the river's mouth. A scraper flaked from a piece of the bottom rim of a green, hand-blown bottle was picked up.

While Martin and Potter described erosion at the site as being severe in 1929, it appears to have increased during the last 50 years. The 1929 report described artifacts as resting 200 feet or more on low land between the bluff and marshland. However, at the time the August, 1979 surveys were made, no trace of artifacts existed in the area between the bluff and marsh. Whatever artifacts were on this low strip in 1929 have been covered by material washing down from the bluff. It appears that most of the site was washed out some time ago.

Artifacts (Surface)

Pottery - 81 small Rockport sherds were found. Six showed evidence of asphaltum painting or spills. Incising or punctating was not evident. A few baked clay balls were present.

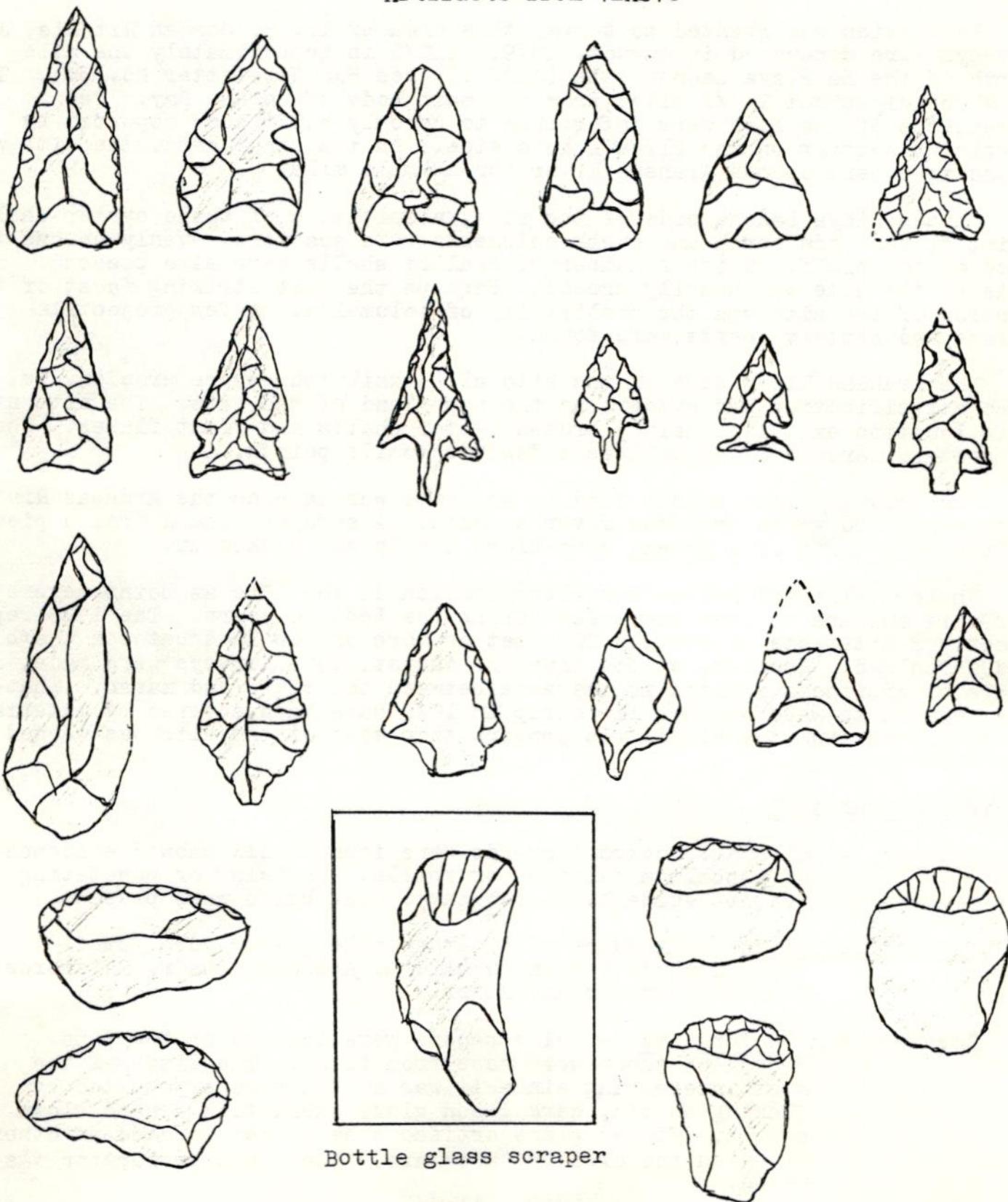
Projectile Points - A total of 35 projectile points were found. Types include Perdiz, Scallorn, Abasolo, Ensor, Matamoros, Clifton, Fresno and Starr.

Scrapers and Perforators - 21 scrapers were located on the site. Twenty of these were made from flint. The 21st was the most interesting since it was an end scraper created by flaking an old, dark green glass sherd from a hand blown bottle. Flaked glass artifacts have been located on other sites in the area but are rare. One small perforator was found.

Shell - One conch columella recovered had been ground on one side of the anterior end to form a gouge. Other columellae had been ground to produce perforators and drills. Several conch shells had been cut - possibly to make shell pendants. One shell bead was found.

Bone - Deer bones predominate. None of these bones appear to have been worked or fashioned into tools.

Artifacts from 41AS78



Bottle glass scraper

Conclusions:

This site belongs to the Rockport Culture based on the pottery and other artifacts found on the surface recently and on the old site report information. It is interesting but somewhat depressing to compare the information from the 50 year old site report with the actual site as it exists today since so much of the site has disappeared due to erosion.

#####

THE HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
HAS AN EDUCATIONAL DISPLAY AVAILABLE.

This statement appears as the title of an announcement sent to area libraries by HAS member Pam Wheat.

Among both professional and avocational archeologists there has recently been an increased awareness of the need to educate the public on the importance of preserving our archeological heritage. At the 1979 TAS meeting in Amarillo, several papers dealt with archeology and education; two of them were presented by HAS members Lou Fullen and Pam Wheat.

The HAS exhibit is another step toward meeting this educational need.

In February, 1978, Texas Anderson, Karen Faggard, and Pam Wheat assembled a multi-component exhibit consisting of a three-panel screen and table-top displays of a simulated Indian campsite and an excavation. Included on the screen was information explaining various aspects of archeology and information on "Where to Learn More."

The response has been good, and over the past two years this exhibit has been seen at six locales in the Houston area. The exhibit opened in April, 1978, at Looscan library and has since been viewed at the Ring, Jungman, West University, and LaPorte libraries, and at Cy-Fair High School. It is scheduled to appear in Wharton next. Pam Wheat also presented two lectures at Looscan library, one of them to a class of school children and their teacher. Pam spoke again to a group of 30 to 40 people at Jungman library in August, 1979.

The basic exhibit was expanded in April, 1979, for a special showing at Houston Lighting and Power Company. The theme, dealing with Indians, was "Beauty Lost; Beauty Found." The expanded exhibit, assembled by Pam Wheat, Norma Jean Smith, and Suzanne Wilson, included replicate lithics contributed by Leland Patterson, and examples of area artifacts. Other participants exhibited artwork depicting Indians, Indian crafts, and collections of Indian artifacts. Basket-weaving demonstrations were given by members of the Alabama-Coushatta tribe. (The HAS exhibit was nicely juxtaposed with a large private collection of undocumented lithics.)

The exhibit is portable should you have a suitable location for display. (It will even fit in a Toyota!) The display consists of two table-top components, each 18"X24"X6", and a three-panel screen 20"X60". Also available is a two part slide/cassette program, Evidence of the Past, which serves as an excellent audio accompaniment to the display.

As there is a new emphasis on educating the public about archeology, HAS members are urged to spread the word about this exhibit! The display may be kept for one month. Members may also serve as sponsors by providing transportation to and from schools and libraries in their areas.

HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 6751
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77005



The HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

has an educational display available.

The display consists of two table-top components and a three panel screen. The table-top components may be arranged to suite your display space.

The following subjects are presented:
A SIMULATED INDIAN CAMPSITE 18" x 24" x 6"
A SIMULATED EXCAVATION 18" x 24" x 6"

The screen is three 20" x 60" panels which explain DIGGING AN ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, ANALYZING THE MATERIAL, STONE TOOLS, WHICH OBJECT IS AN ARTIFACT and WHERE TO LEARN MORE.

There is also a two part (10 minutes each) slide/cassette program available called EVIDENCE OF THE PAST. It explains survey and excavation in Texas.

If you would be interested in the loan of this display and slide program, please complete the form and return it to the HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, attention: Pam Wheat. The display may be kept for 3 or 4 weeks.

Return to request the H.A.S. educational display and program.

Name _____ Organization _____

Address _____ Display ? _____ Slide Program ? _____
(of display)

Phone _____ Date Desired _____

Alternate Date _____

Sponsor (if possible) _____
[H.A.S. member willing to
handle the transportation]