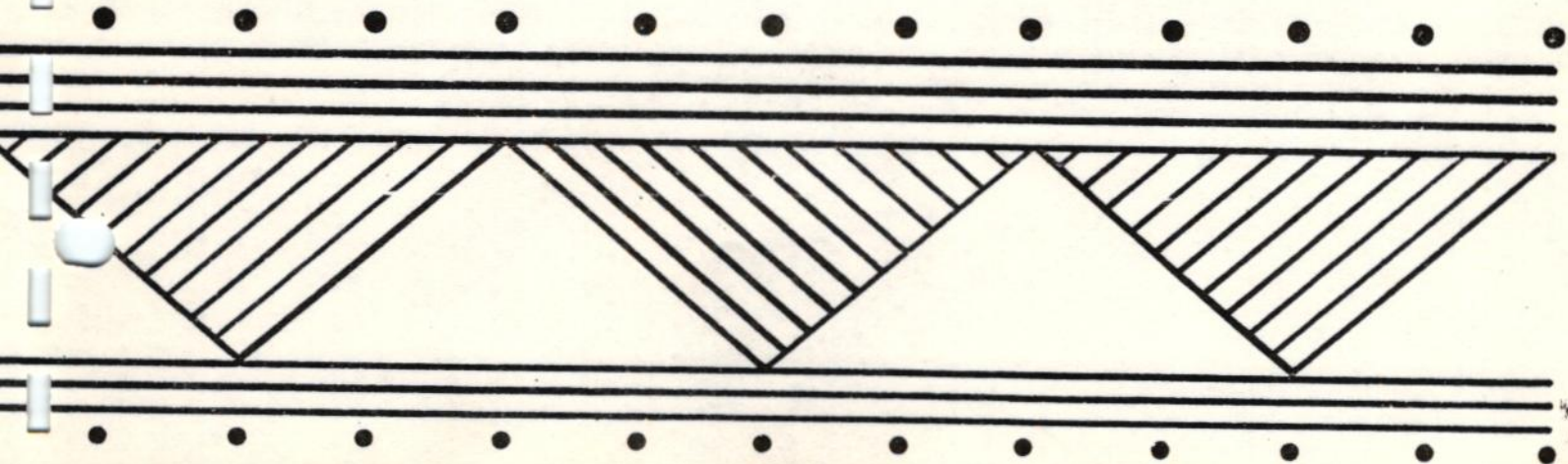


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The Newsletter is published four times per year by the Houston Archeological Society. Contributions of news items, short articles and information of archeological significance should be sent to the Editor - Alan R. Duke, 1706 Oaks Drive, Pasadena,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

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Coming Events

- January 3-7, 1978 - The Society for Historical Archeology - 11th Annual Conference and 9th Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology at St. Anthony Hotel, San Antonio, Texas.
- January 19-21, 1978 - Texas Historical Commission - "Exploration of a Common Legacy: A Conference on Border Architecture", La Posada Motor Hotel, 113 N. Main, McAllen, Texas.
- 1978 thru 1980 - Texas Antiquities Committee. "Treasure, People, Ships and Dreams". A traveling marine archeology exhibit displaying artifacts, maps, drawings and photographs from the salvage work on three Spanish ships which foundered off Padre Island in 1554. The exhibit will travel to Corpus Christi, San Antonio, El Paso, Lubbock, Canyon, Fort Worth, Dallas, Austin and Houston over the next three years.
- April 2-8, 1978 - Society for Applied Anthropology Annual Meeting, Merida, Yucatan, Mexico.
- April 6-7, 1978 - Ethnicity on the Great Plains 2nd Annual Interdisciplinary Symposium of the Center for Great Plains Studies, University of Nebraska, Lincoln.
- May 4-6, 1978 - Society for American Archeology - 43rd Annual Meeting, Tucson Marriott Hotel and Tucson Convention Center, Tucson, Arizona.
- June 1978 - Texas Archeological Society Field School, Galveston, Texas.

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Three Late Sites in Harris County, Texas - L. W. Patterson

Normally, people hesitate to publish small surface collections from archeological sites. In this article, three small sites in inland Harris County are described, which each add something to the knowledge of local archeology during the Late Prehistoric and slightly earlier final Woodland period. These sites are all located on the banks of a single creek, within a one mile interval. The environmental setting is the same for all of these sites, on level sandy ground in wooded areas. As noted previously (Patterson 1976), late sites in this general area tend to be more frequent than earlier sites, and seem to show less repeated use of single sites in the Late Prehistoric. Surface collections were made on each of these sites over a period of several years up to mid 1977. The small amounts of artifacts found on each site over an extended period of time probably indicates low use frequencies for short seasonal time periods. Diagnostic artifacts are illustrated in Figure 1.

Site 41HR183

Site 41HR183 covers an area of approximately 100 feet in diameter, but most items were collected at one side of the site, in an area of less than 50 feet in diameter. This site has been almost totally destroyed in the last year by construction activities. An unclassified arrow point fragment demonstrates the presence of a Late Prehistoric component. A small Elam dart point weighing 3.0 grams (Suhm and Jelks 1962:185) may indicate additional late Woodland period occupation. This is the only one of the three sites described here that yielded any pottery, and the sample is small. Five Goose Creek sandy paste sherds were found, with three over 15 mm square and two of smaller size.

Lithic manufacturing activities are present on this site, as shown by a variety of items. Eight thick flint chips were recovered. One small quartzite hammerstone was found, 35 mm in diameter. One small flat flint core was found with several facets on the edges. A few formal lithic flake tool types were recovered, including 2 graters and a perforator. A complete microblade industry is indicated, with one microblade core, one blade core trim flake, and 16 microblades having widths from 8.8 to 10.2 mm. Several unifacially retouched flakes were found, including 4 possible end blades and 3 possible side blades, perhaps used as compound arrow point elements.

Site 41HR213

The main diagnostic artifact found on this site is a small Alba arrow point (Suhm and Jelks 1962:263) weighing 0.7 grams, which places this site in the Late Prehistoric, sometime after AD 600 (Aten 1971: fig 10). No pottery was found, which seems to be the general case of little use of ceramics on late sites in this area. Even though the sample size is small, a prismatic blade industry is indicated by a blade core trim flake and three prismatic blades, with widths of 8.3, 9.0 and 16.0 mm. Five other miscellaneous prismatic flakes were also found.

One small flake has unifacial retouch and may have been hafted as a side blade for cutting or as an arrow point element. Five small smooth flint and quartzite pebbles were recovered, 10 to 18 mm in diameter, which may have been used in rattles. Information on the collection of irregular shaped flint flakes is summarized in Table 1. There is evidence of heat treating on several flint flakes with reddish discoloration. The low percentage of primary cortex flakes may indicate that lithic raw materials were at least partially trimmed before bringing to this site. All materials on this site were found in an area less than 50 feet in diameter.

Site 41HR214

A Perdiz arrow point (Suhm and Jelks 1962:283) weighing 0.9 grams and on this site indicates the presence of a Late Prehistoric component. A small Kent dart point (Suhm and Jelks 1962:199) was also found, either indicating earlier late Woodland period use of this site also, or simply that use of the spear-thrower and darts overlapped use of the bow and arrow. Artifacts were found on this site as a very light scatter of materials over an area of about 100 feet in diameter. Two microblades were recovered, with widths of 7.5 and 11.0 mm. The site also yielded one miscellaneous prismatic flake, one fired clay ball, and two small flint pebbles of about 25 mm diameter. The small collection of irregular shaped flint flakes is summarized in Table 1.

General Comments

Several comments can be made that apply to all three of these late sites. Heat treating of flint was used fairly extensively. All lithic flake collections have examples of edge damage indicating both cutting and scraping functions. While several types of flint are present, such as red jasper, a light tan variety of flint predominates. As has been previously noted (Patterson 1976), lithic flake sizes tend to average fairly small on late sites. The smallest size flakes shown in Table 1 give an indication that various lithic reduction activities were being performed. The small amounts of primary cortex flakes possibly indicates that little untrimmed lithic raw materials were being imported to these sites. Primary raw materials in this area are generally flint pebbles and nodules, normally having a distinct outside cortex. The general lack of discarded flint cores may show that lithic materials were imported mainly as flakes.

The sites summarized here are probably short term seasonal campsites used by nomadic people following a hunting and gathering lifeway. It is important to publish a large number of this type of archeological site, to give a more complete picture of living activities and occupational patterns.

References

- Aten, L.E. 1971 Archeological Excavations at the Dow-Cleaver Site, Brazoria Co., Texas, Texas Arch. Salvage Project, Tech. Bulletin 1
- Patterson, L.W. 1976 Technological Changes in Harris County, Texas, Bulletin of Texas Archeological Society 47:171-188
- Suhm, D.A. and E.B. Jelks 1962 Handbook of Texas Archeology: Type Descriptions, Texas Arch. Society, Special Publication No. 1

Table 1

Summary of Irregular Shaped Lithic Flakes

Flake Size, mm squares	% of total		
	<u>HR183</u>	<u>HR213</u>	<u>HR214</u>
30 to 35	0	2.1	3.5
25 to 30	0.4	0.7	10.3
20 to 25	1.6	2.1	17.2
18 to 20	4.7	5.6	10.3
16 to 18	3.6	4.2	6.9
14 to 16	4.2	4.9	13.9
12 to 14	6.0	3.5	17.2
10 to 12	14.0	14.8	6.9
8 to 10	14.7	21.2	10.3
6 to 8	22.5	22.6	0
under 6	28.3	18.3	3.5
	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Sample Size	449	142	29
Cortex Type			
primary	3.6	2.8	3.4
secondary	10.2	17.6	37.9
interior	86.2	79.6	58.7
	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

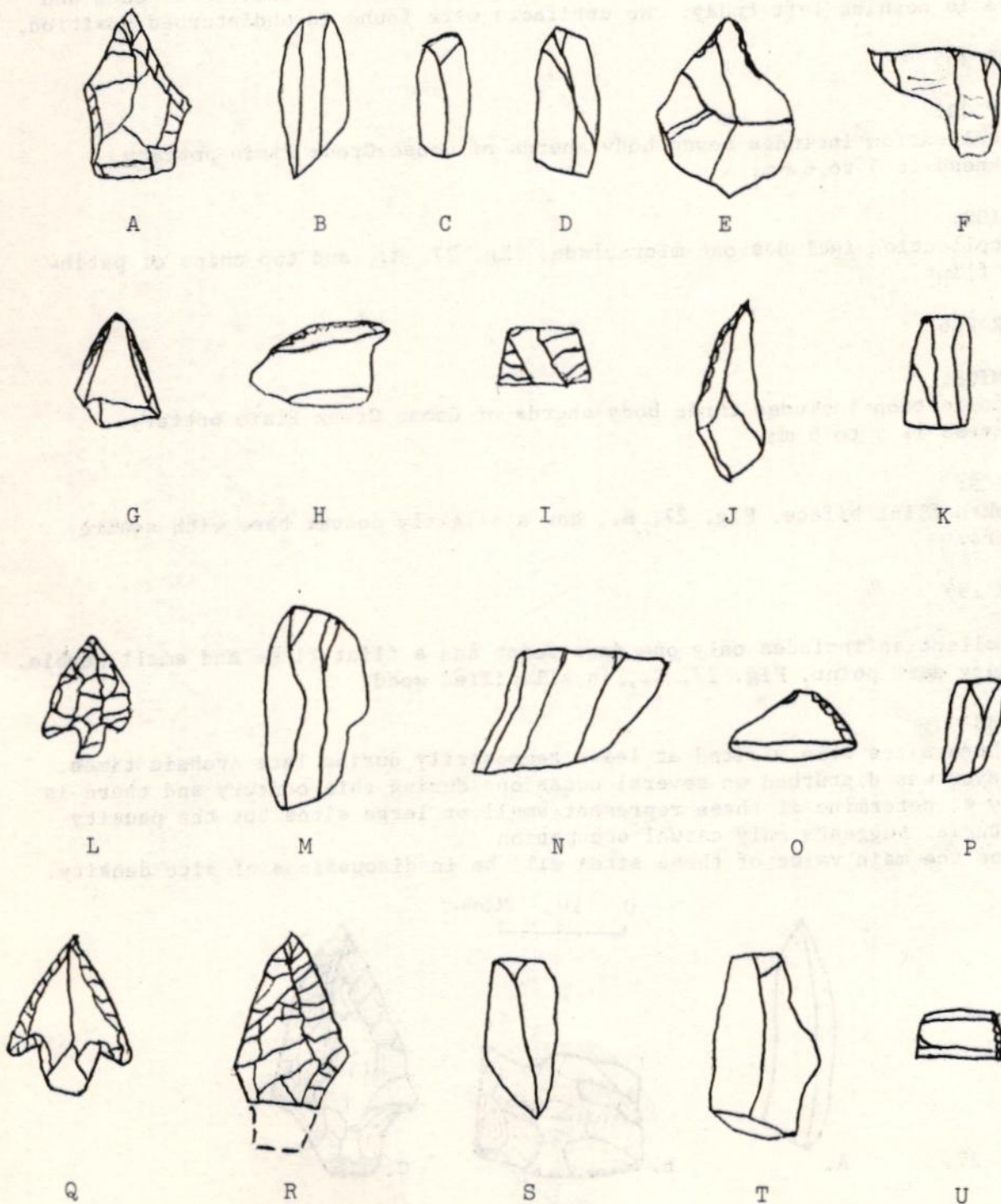
FIGURE 1

LITHIC ARTIFACTS (ACTUAL SIZE)

Site 41HR183: A-Elam point; B,C,D,K-prismatic blades; E-graver; F-blade core trim flake; G-unifacial point; H-unifacial side blade; I-arrow point fragment; J-perforator

Site 41HR213: L-Alba point; M,P-prismatic flakes; N-blade core trim flake; O-unifacial side blade

Site 41HR214: Q-Perdiz point; R-Kent point; S,T-prismatic flakes; U-unifacial side blade



White Oak Bayou continued from HAS Newsletter No. 57

W.L. McClure

41 HR 285, 41 HR 286 & 41 HR 299

These three sites are spaced evenly along 3000 feet of White Oak Bayou. 41 HR 299 is on the south bank and the others are on the north bank. Soil is sandy loam over sandy silt. Surface elevation is about 92 feet above sea level.

A few artifacts were exposed by erosion after the banks were altered by channel improvements. Little remained of the sites when they were found and there is nothing left today. No artifacts were found in undisturbed position.

41 HR 285

CERAMICS:

The collection includes seven body sherds of Goose Creek Plain pottery. Thickness is 5 to 6 mm.

LITHICS:

The collection includes one microblade, Fig. 27, A., and two chips of patinated flint.

41 HR 286

CERAMICS:

The collection includes three body sherds of Goose Creek Plain pottery. Thickness is 5 to 6 mm.

LITHICS:

A broken flint biface, Fig. 27, B., has a slightly convex base with square corners.

41 HR 299

The collection includes only one dart point and a flint flake and small pebble. The Gary dart point, Fig. 27, C., is silicified wood.

DISCUSSION:

The three sites were visited at least temporarily during late Archaic times. The bayou was disturbed on several occasions during this century and there is no way to determine if these represent small or large sites but the paucity of material suggests only casual occupation. Perhaps the main value of these sites will be in discussions of site density.

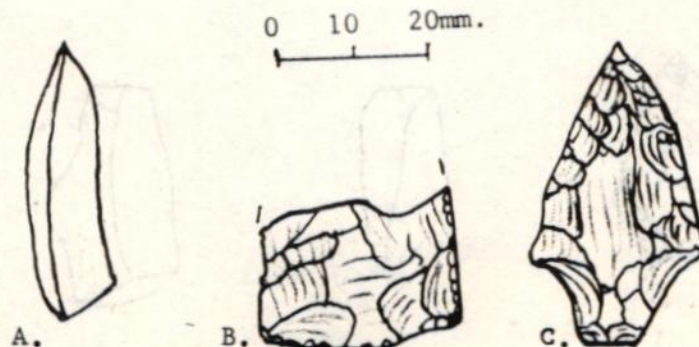


Figure 27.

Site Survey on San Jacinto Bay - Harris County - Alan R. Duke

The announcement of plans for construction of a new chemical plant on the shores of San Jacinto Bay precipitated a request by the writer to obtain permission, in early 1977, to survey the area prior to and during ground preparation work to obtain information on prehistoric and historic sites that might exist on this tract of land. The particular stretch of shoreline involved on the west shore of the bay is part of an area rich in archeological sites and has played an important role also in the early history of Texas.

The writer has located a number of sites a short distance from the proposed plant site (41HR71, 72, 73, 74, 160). These sites are shell middens on high bluffs above the bay and appear to have been occupied as early as 1000 AD up until the 1700's.

Early settlers, including a few members of the Texian army that defeated Santa Anna at San Jacinto, built homesteads on the bluffs overlooking the bay after the conflict. The battle was fought in 1836 just a short distance northwest of the area.

The ground on which the new plant is being built was heavily wooded originally and was cut by deep ravines with an occasional flowing spring whose waters ran into the bay. Potsherds have been found around the springs in the area and "old-timers" state they drank from these springs until just before World War II.

A number of mounds were present on the plant site and it appeared they had great potential as possible occupation sites. Some of these features were up to twenty feet in diameter and had an elevation as much as fifteen inches above the surrounding ground level. Tests were made on the mounds to a depth of four feet without any evidence of occupation. How these sand mounds were formed is not clear at this point.

The beaches below the bluffs and the cliffs themselves were surveyed for evidence of shell, pottery and other artifacts typical of sites in this area. Apparently the Indians chose not to occupy this particular location or the severe erosion of the cliffs has obliterated any trace of occupation.

The search for historic material was somewhat more successful. This land had been occupied by ranchers running cattle and remnants of the old corrals, sheds and even an old homesite was found. The house remains - brick, charred wood, old iron, broken glass, etc. appears to have been from a house built after the turn of the century. Old railroad ties used in constructing the corrals contained date nails from the 20's, 30's and early 40's. One old wooden stirrup, in excellent condition, was found hanging in a shed.

It would be nice to be able to say that one or more Indian sites had been found or that an early settler homesite had been located but this was not the case. At least, however, it is possible to say that the area was surveyed carefully and that sites were not destroyed without first obtaining information from them. Unless something further is uncovered we can at least indicate on our master site survey map that the area, aside from recent occupation, is sterile. Thus we can contribute further to the knowledge of prehistoric and historic occupation patterns along San Jacinto Bay.

The area surveyed is completely changed today. The trees, brush, ravines, springs and corrals have been replaced by steel structures,

"hard-top" parking areas and people. Construction is necessary, of course, to meet the increasing demands of our way of life for more material things. We must, however, try to anticipate the changes and make our surveys promptly when construction is imminent so we can salvage information that would otherwise be lost for all time.

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Editor's Note

It has been my experience that most enlightened companies will try to assist in every way to permit qualified personnel to obtain information on archeological sites before it is necessary to proceed with construction. In most cases it is possible to leave the sites undisturbed long enough to obtain the information. In some cases if the company is aware of the situation, the site may be left untouched permanently.

In order to obtain permission to perform salvage and survey work on private property (individual or company), go thru the proper channels to reach personnel authorized to give permission to enter the property. Best approach is a letter outlining the reasons for the survey, how long it will take and its value or contribution to the prehistory of the area.

Needless to say, time is money if contracts for ground clearing, etc. have been let and any delay will raise the overall cost of the project. Then, of course, there is always the possibility that a major discovery will be made that could result in serious delays in the project work and in adverse publicity for the company or individuals if their response does not agree with conservation goals.

So, it is best to start surveys early - well before construction begins, so that time is available and all parties concerned can work out a reasonable approach to the survey - salvage work.

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