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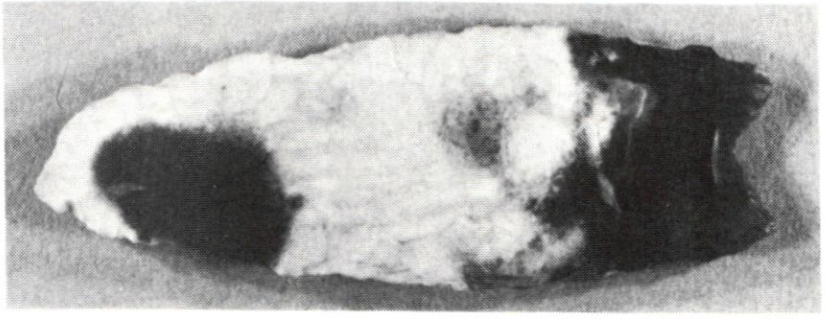

Clovis Point from Galveston County, Texas

Contents

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Test Excavations at Site 41WH20, Wharton County, Texas

L. W. Patterson and J. D. Hudgins

Introduction

As a continuing part of archeological survey work in the San Bernard River drainage area, in eastern Wharton County and western Fort Bend County, the Houston Archeological Society carried out test excavations at prehistoric Site 41WH20 on April 2 and May 7, 1988. This site was originally found and recorded by Joe Hudgins on the basis of a small amount of cultural materials observed on the surface.

Persons who participated in these excavations included: Andrea McCormick, David Konvicka, Lonnie Griffin, C.R. Ebersole, Ray McCausland, Linda Moorrees, Bernard Naman, Lee Patterson, Sheldon Kindall, Dave Atherton, Richard Gregg, David Pettus, Joe Hudgins, Gary Ryman, Bill Schurmann, Marshall Black, Mike Marshall, Alexandra Zielke, Alexandra Hamaker, Gary Blumerick and Tibor Blumeirell. Field work was directed by Sheldon Kindall and laboratory processing of artifacts was directed by David Pettus. Work at this site was made possible by the permission of the landowner, W. V. Srubar.

Site 41WH20 is located on a gently sloping terrace near a stream bed that is a tributary of the San Bernard River. The general area is a mixture of woodlands and coastal prairie. A variety of plant and animal resources would have been available to prehistoric Indians at this location, with some food resources on a seasonal basis. The occupation at Site 41WH20 appears to have been only in the Early Ceramic and Late Prehistoric time periods, with the earliest occupation possibly starting about A.D. 100. This differs from other prehistoric sites that have been tested in this general area; sites such as 41FB32, 41FB34, 41FB37, and 41WH50 (Patterson and Hudgins 1986, 1987a, 1987b, 1988) all had earlier preceramic occupation components.

Excavation details

A layout of the excavations is shown in Figure 1. Four 1-meter square test pits were placed in the general area where cultural materials were found on the surface (Pits A to D). Excavations were done in 10-cm levels and all soil was put through 1/4-inch mesh screens.

Test pits A to D were excavated to levels varying from 50 to 100 cm as 1-meter squares. Test Pit A was excavated deeper, from 70 to 130 cm, as a 1/4-size pit. Test Pit B was excavated from 100 to 120 cm on the north half. Test Pit C was excavated from 50 to 150 cm as a 1/4-size pit. Pit D was terminated at 60 cm.

It was apparent from the results of the first four test pits that cultural materials continued to occur at levels deeper than were excavated. In the fairly loose sandy soil found here, it was judged too dangerous to continue deeper in 1-meter square test pits. Therefore, Pit E was done in a different manner to enable deeper excavation in a safe way. Pit E was started as a 2-meter-square pit and excavated to a depth of 100 cm. A 1-meter-square pit was then started in the center of the larger 2-meter square and excavated from 100 to 245 cm. Pit E was terminated at a depth where sterile clay was found.

Comments on geology

It is difficult to interpret the geological processes that formed the test area of Site 41WH20. Ceramic specimens were found at all excavation levels above the sterile clay. This means that earlier soil

layers that would have represented preceramic Archaic and Paleo-Indian time periods are missing. It appears that a severe erosional episode occurred sometime after A.D. 0, removing all soil levels down to sterile clay of the Late Pleistocene.

Some historic materials were found as deep as 110 cm in Pit E. It appears that at least part of the strata in the test area consist of redeposited soils. It has not been determined if redeposited soil extends to the entire depth tested, to sterile clay. Even though much of the redeposition of soil seems to have occurred in historic time, the possibility remains that the deepest strata of this site may represent the Early Ceramic period, since no arrow points of the Late Prehistoric period were found below 95 cm.

Ceramics

A summary of potsherds from the excavations is shown in Table 1. A total of 97 sherds were found. All of these sherds were of the Goose Creek sandy paste type except for a large grog- (sherd-) tempered specimen found in Pit D at the 20-30 cm level. Grog-tempered pottery occurs late in the Late Prehistoric period in the Galveston Bay area (Aten 1983:14.4). This sherd may indicate occasional inland incursions of Indians from the coastal margin. One sherd from Pit B (60-70 cm) had a brushed surface. A rim sherd with a drilled lace hole was found in Pit E (50-100 cm). An unusual conical bottom sherd found in Pit E (190-200 cm) has an incised design that might be a maker's mark (Figure 2F). As noted above, ceramics were found at all levels of the test pits, down to the start of sterile clay.

Projectile points

Only a few projectile points were found in these test excavations. All specimens are illustrated in Figure 2. An unclassified dart point stem (possibly of the Yarbrough type) was found on the surface, a dart point blade tip was found in Pit C (100-150 cm) and a dart point preform was found in Pit B (70 cm). A Scallorn arrow point was found in Pit D (20-30 cm) and an Alba-like unifacial arrow point found in Pit E (95 cm) has little retouch on the second side. All projectile points are made from local types of chert. The standardized types of arrow points indicate occupations in the Late Prehistoric period, after A.D. 600 (Aten 1983:306).

General lithic materials

A summary of chert flakes recovered is given in Table 2. Only 186 flakes were found in all of the test pits, which indicates a fairly low level of lithic manufacturing activity at Site 41WH20. As noted for nearby Site 41WH50 (Patterson and Hudgins 1988), a relatively small number of chert flakes may be indicative of the specific seasonal nature of this type of site. Other than flakes and projectile points, no other types of lithic specimens were found at this site.

Faunal materials

Recovery of bone materials at Site 41WH20 was good, as shown in Table 3. W. L. McClure will make a detailed analysis of the bone specimens. Even though there is soil mixing at this location, the large bone collection will add to data available on the diets of ceramic-era prehistoric Indians.

A summary of freshwater shellfish remains is given in Table 4. It is apparent that shellfish were not used as a major food resource at this location. The shell samples will be given to Raymond Neck for further analysis.

Possible fragments of human skull were found in Pit B (40-50 cm) and Pit E (50-100 cm).

Clayballs

As is common for prehistoric sites in Southeast Texas, fired clayballs were found at Site 41WH20, as summarized in Table 5. Clayballs are usually associated with fire hearths and cooking activities (Patterson 1986).

Historic materials

Historic materials were found from the surface of this site to a depth of 100-110 cm. In Pit A, historic materials consisted of glass (10-20 cm), miscellaneous metal (10-20 cm) and a historic ceramic sherd (30-40 cm). In Pit E, historic materials were found at all levels to a depth of 110 cm. In the 50-100 cm level of Pit E, historic specimens included 2 modern sherds, glass, iron nails and a lead bullet. In the 50-100 cm level of Pit E, historic specimens included an iron nail, glass and miscellaneous metal. One iron nail was found in the 100-110 cm level of Pit E.

One gram of seeds that appear to be modern were found in Pit A (110-120 cm). Seeds at this depth could be due to soil redeposition or to soil disturbance by gophers.

Summary

The results of test excavations at Site 41WH20 show that this site had prehistoric occupations in the ceramic time interval, in the Late Prehistoric period and probably also in the Early Ceramic period. Much of the stratification of this site is disturbed. There are no strata remaining that represent the Archaic and Paleo-Indian periods above the sterile Late Pleistocene clay, which probably indicates a severe erosional episode sometime after the Late Archaic. Even though the stratification of Site 41WH20 is disturbed, the large bone sample will give significant additional data on faunal subsistence patterns of ceramic occupations. As is common for prehistoric sites in Southeast Texas, Site 41WH20 is probably a seasonal campsite utilized by Indians with a hunting and gathering lifeway.

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Table 1. Summary of Ceramics (number of sherds)

Level, cm	Test Pit A	B	C	D	E
0–10	0	3	0	2	-
10–20	0	1	1	2	-
20–30	0	0	1	1	-
30–40	1	0	2	3(a)	-
40–50	3	2	1	-	-
0–50	-	-	-	-	15
50–60	0	2	0	5	-
60–70	0	2	1	-	-
70–80	0	0	1	-	-
80–90	0	0	1	-	-
90–100	0	1	0	-	-
50–100	-	-	-	-	18
100–150	-	-	0	-	-
100–110	0	0	-	-	1
110–120	0	0	-	-	3
120–130	0	-	-	-	0
130–140	-	-	-	-	1
140–150	-	-	-	-	1
150–160	-	-	-	-	0
160–170	-	-	-	-	4
170–180	-	-	-	-	3
180–190	-	-	-	-	3
190–200	-	-	-	-	7
200–230	-	-	-	-	3
230–245	-	-	-	-	2
Total	4	11	8	13	61

a: 30-50 cm in Pit D

Table 2. Summary of Chert Flakes

Level, cm	Test Pit A	B	C	D	E
0–10	0	4	1	0	-
10–20	1	5	3	0	-
20–30	0	0	0	4	-
30–40	0	1	3	8(a)	-
40–50	0	5	0	-	-
0–50	-	-	-	-	31
50–60	1	4	1	7	-
60–70	0	6	0	-	-
70–80	1	4	0	-	-
80–90	2	0	0	-	-
90–100	0	0	0	-	-
50–100	-	-	-	-	52
100–150	-	-	0	-	-
100–110	1	0	-	-	8
110–120	2	0	-	-	4
120–130	0	-	-	-	2
130–140	-	-	-	-	6
140–150	-	-	-	-	4
150–160	-	-	-	-	2
160–170	-	-	-	-	3
170–180	-	-	-	-	6
180–190	-	-	-	-	1
190–200	-	-	-	-	3
200–230	-	-	-	-	0
230–245	-	-	-	-	0
Total	8	29	8	19	122

a: 30 to 50 cm in Pit D

Table 3. Summary of Bone (weight in grams)

Level, cm	Test Pit A	B	C	D	E
0–10	0	5	0	12	-
10–20	0	7	4	4	-
20–30	6	133	5	22	-
30–40	0	7	3	123(a)	-
40–50	7	39	9	-	-
0–50	-	-	-	-	24
50–60	2	53	0	76	-
60–70	1	15	0	-	-
70–80	2	0	10	-	-
80–90	3	12	3	-	-
90–100	2	9	2	-	-
50–100	-	-	-	-	219
100–150	-	-	20	-	-
100–110	7	0	-	-	16
110–120	8	0	-	-	6
120–130	6	-	-	-	8
130–140	-	-	-	-	9
140–150	-	-	-	-	8
150–160	-	-	-	-	8
160–170	-	-	-	-	9
170–180	-	-	-	-	74
180–190	-	-	-	-	57
190–200	-	-	-	-	52
200–230	-	-	-	-	121
230–245	-	-	-	-	14

a: 30 to 50 cm in Pit D

Table 4. Summary of Shell (weight in grams)

Level, cm	Test Pit A	B	C	D	E
0–10	0	0	0	0	-
10–20	0	0	0	0	-
20–30	0	0	0	0	-
30–40	0	5	0	0	-
40–50	0	20	0	0	-
0–50	-	-	-	-	4
50–60	0	30	0	7	-
60–70	0	43	0	-	-
70–80	0	51	0	-	-
80–90	0	38	0	-	-
90–100	0	25	0	-	-
50–100	-	-	-	-	6
100–150	-	-	0	-	-
100–110	0	12	-	-	0
110–120	-	4	-	-	0
120–130	-	-	-	-	17
130–140	-	-	-	-	0
140–150	-	-	-	-	0
150–160	-	-	-	-	0
160–170	-	-	-	-	0
170–180	-	-	-	-	30
180–190	-	-	-	-	33
190–200	-	-	-	-	66
200–230	-	-	-	-	58
230–245	-	-	-	-	41

Table 5. Summary of Clayballs

Level, cm	Test Pit A	B	C	D	E
0–10	0	0	0	9	-
10–20	0	0	0	6	-
20–30	0	0	0	0	-
30–40	3	0	0	0	-
40–50	4	8	0	0	-
0–50	-	-	-	-	39
50–60	0	17	0	5	-
60–70	0	14	0	-	-
70–80	0	11	0	-	-
80–90	0	14	0	-	-
90–100	0	13	0	-	-
50–100	-	-	-	-	0
100–150	-	-	4	-	-
100–110	0	0	-	-	10
110–120	0	0	-	-	0
120–130	0	-	-	-	0
130–140	-	-	-	-	0
140–150	-	-	-	-	0
150–160	-	-	-	-	0
160–170	-	-	-	-	0
170–180	-	-	-	-	0
180–190	-	-	-	-	0
190–200	-	-	-	-	0
200–230	-	-	-	-	0
230–245	-	-	-	-	0

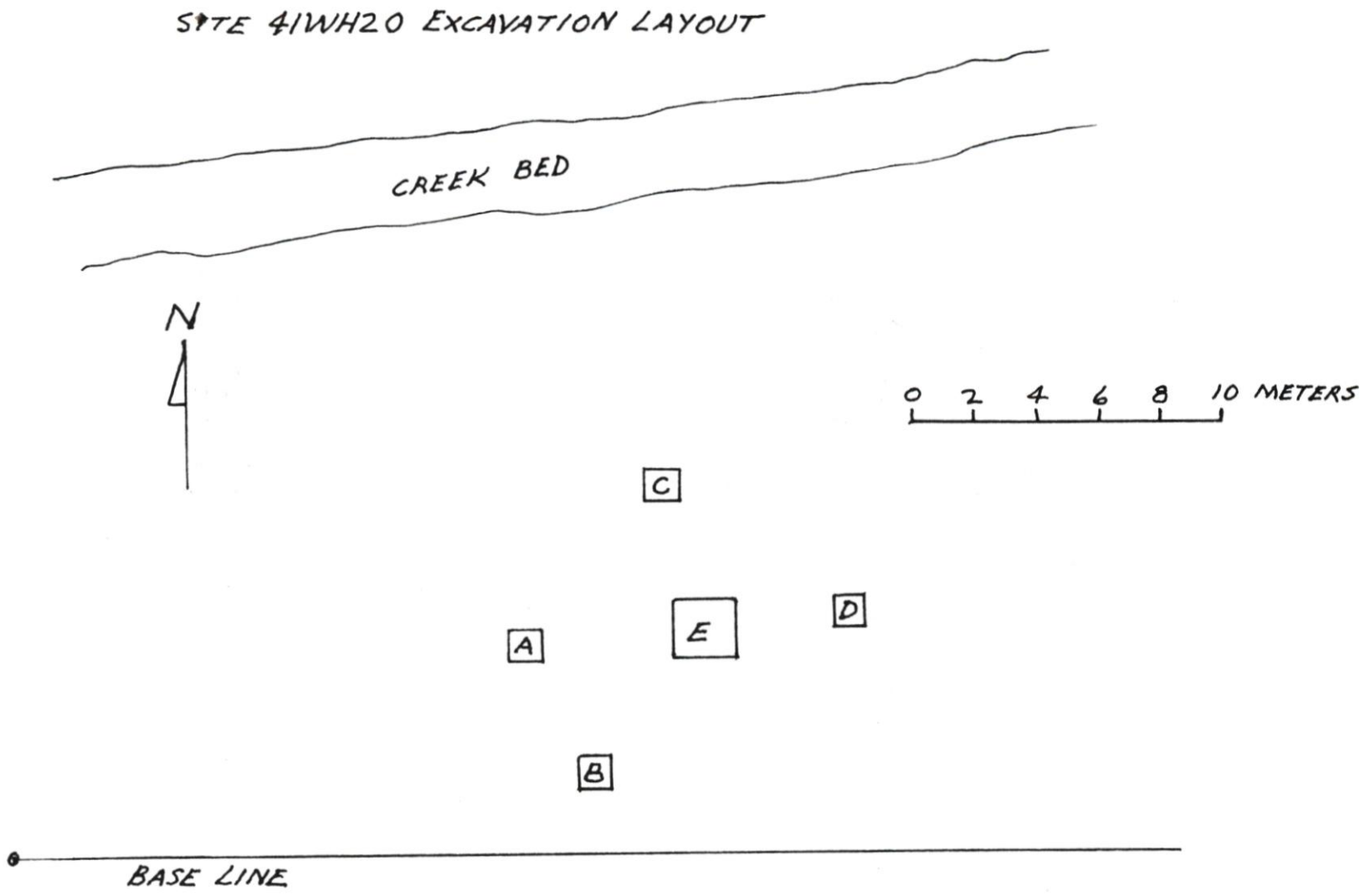
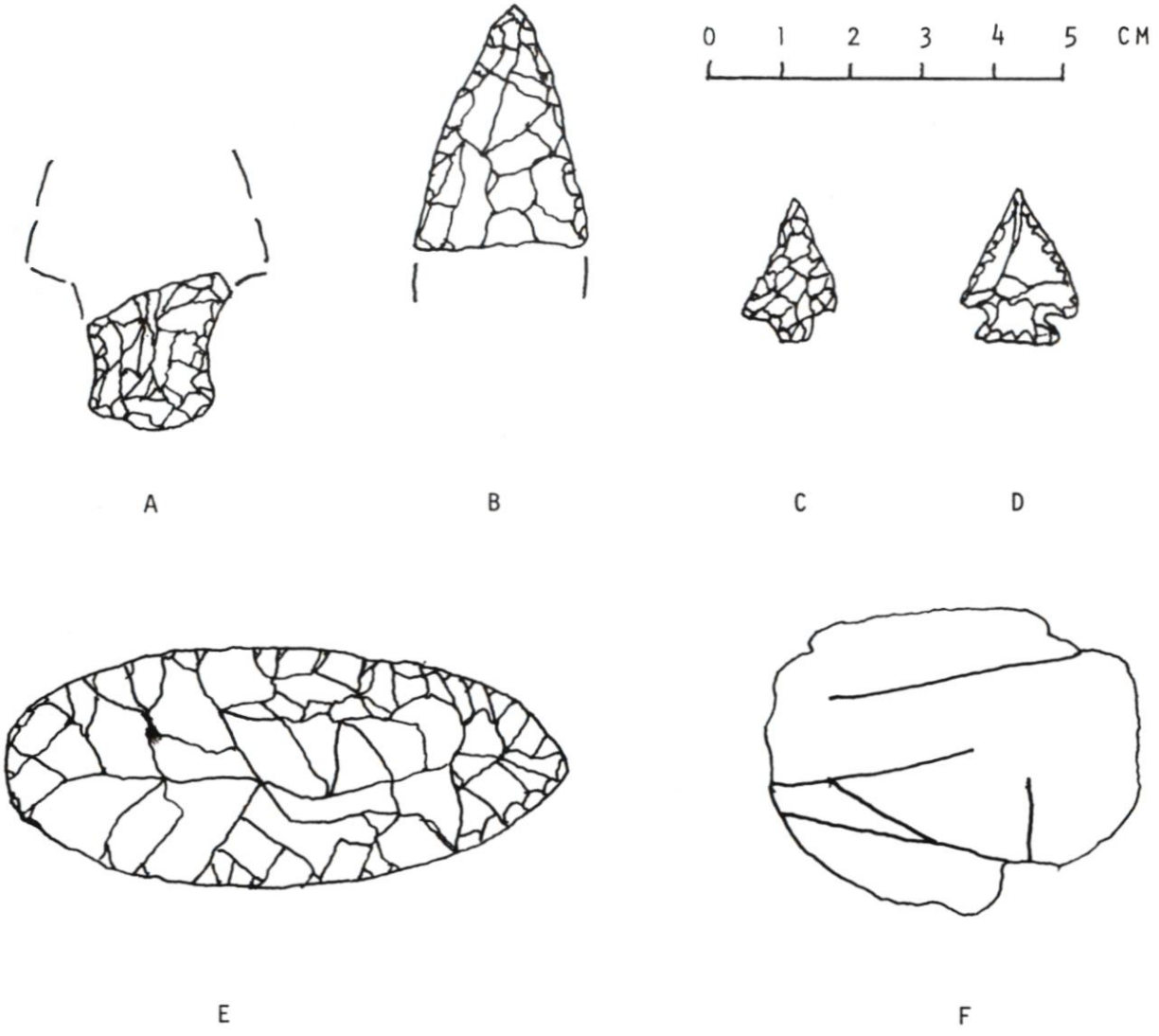


Figure 1. Site 41WH20 Excavation Layout



A,B – dart point fragments; C – Alba-like point; D – Scallorn point; E – dart point preform; F – incised bottom sherd

Figure 2. Site 41WH20 Artifacts

A Clovis Point from 41GV101, Galveston County, Texas

Jeffery A. Huebner

During a weekend in November 1987, Ms. Millie Anderson of Beaumont, Texas, was walking along Crystal Beach on Bolivar Peninsula in Galveston County and found a brown and white fluted point lying on the sand (Yadon 1987). This artifact was brought to my attention by my father-in-law, Dr. William D. Ethridge, who had borrowed it from Ms. Anderson.

The artifact was fabricated from a fine-grained chocolate brown chert (Figure 1). The white portions of the point appear to be a differential patination; on some areas it is milky white and on others it is a light blue-gray color. The source of the raw material is not known at this time. The specimen shows heavy weathering; the lateral edges and the base are ground smooth from beach rolling processes, and the flake scars have been worn, making it difficult to determine the pattern of lithic reduction. The point is nearly complete, with only the distal tip missing. It is 76 mm in length, 28 mm at the widest point, and 7 mm thick. The width at the base is 18 mm and the basal concavity is 18 mm deep. Both faces of the point are fluted; the obverse has a single flute 24 mm long and the reverse has two flutes, the initial one is 32 mm long and the secondary is shorter and wider, directly over the first. All three flute scars terminate in hinge fractures. No other cultural material was associated with this artifact.

The artifact was found near the low tide margin on the beach. The locality has been recorded at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) as 41GV101. This site will continue to be monitored for additional site materials.

Reports of Clovis points in the upper coastal region of Texas are rare (cf. Hester 1980:4). Meltzer (1986), in his survey of Texas Clovis points, reported 10 examples from the McFaddin Beach site in Jefferson County (Long 1977), two from Harris County, one from the Galena site (Hester 1980:4) and another from the Addicks Reservoir survey (Wheat 1953:240). At present, five Clovis points from the Sabine Pass area in Jefferson County are being analyzed at Texas A&M University (Shaffer 1988).

Acknowledgments

I would like to express his appreciation to Ms. Millie Anderson and Dr. William Ethridge for their interest in archaeology and for bringing the artifact to my attention. I would also like to give special thanks to Mr. James Nelson for taking the artifact photographs.

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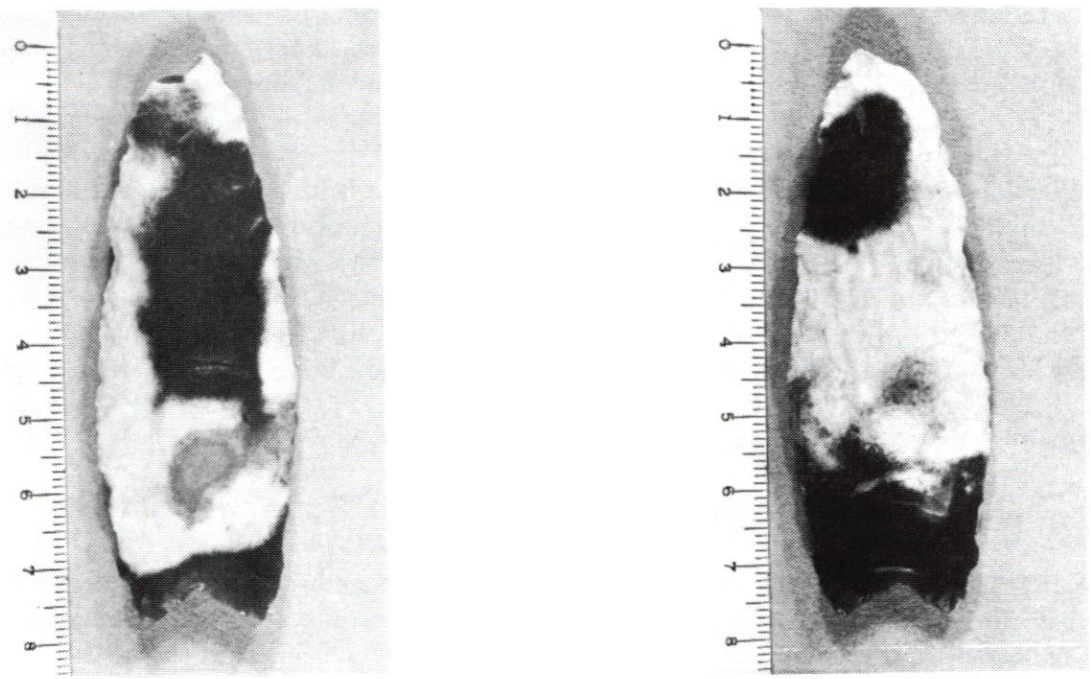
Jeffery A. Huebner is a Ph.D. student in anthropology at The University of Texas at Austin. He received BA and MA degrees from The University of Texas at San Antonio. Jeff has done field work in both Texas and Louisiana and is currently analyzing the materials from a late prehistoric bison butchering station (41 VT 66).



a. obverse b. reverse

Figure 1. Clovis point from 41GV101

Archeological Sites in the Damon, Texas, Area

L. W. Patterson and J. D. Hudgins

Introduction

This article is a summary of some archeological survey work done in the general area of the town of Damon in Brazoria County, Texas. Collections of prehistoric artifacts from two sites made by Mr. Arnold Svoboda are reviewed, and results are given for a brief follow-up survey on one of these sites. Comments are also given on some previous survey work in this general area done by Cole and McMichael (1968).

As indicated by artifact types, the general area around Damon had a long prehistoric occupation sequence, as is common in other areas of Southeast Texas (Patterson 1983). This occupation sequence starts in the Late Paleo-Indian period about 10,000 years ago and continues through the Late Prehistoric. There is also a published notation (Bevier 1925:505) that historic Karankawa Indians occupied the Damon area.

Previous investigation at Damon Mound

Damon Mound is located at the town of Damon and is a well-known geological feature. It is the surface manifestation of a vertical salt plug, with a typical limestone cap. According to Bevier (1925:505), historic Karankawa Indians camped on the upper portions of this mound because of the natural advantages of this elevation. The "sour" water from this location attained renown as a "medicine," and was actually sold as a medicine in the 1920s. Limestone is currently mined from about 50 to 100 feet below the surface of this mound for commercial use.

Cole and McMichael (1968) have reported on archeological investigations of sites on and adjacent to Damon Mound. Their report gives the locations of several prehistoric sites and describes collections of artifacts made by local people. Projectile points representing the Late Paleo-Indian period (10,000 to 7000 B.P.) include Plainview, Plainview-like, Angostura-like and Early Side-Notched types. The Early Side-Notched points, with ground basal edges, are similar to Late Paleo-Indian specimens found at Site 41WH19 in Wharton County (Patterson et al. 1987). The Archaic period (7000 to 1900 B.P.) is represented by Morhiss, Bulverde-like, Kent, Ellis, Pedernales and Darl dart point types. Some of the Kent points could also be from the Early Ceramic period (1900 to 1400 B.P.). A Scallorn arrow point from the Late Prehistoric period (1400 to 500 B.P.) also seems to be illustrated by Cole and McMichael (1968).

Damon Mound Site 41BO167

Site 41BO167 is located on Damon Mound and appears to have been occupied by Late Prehistoric and Historic period Indians. A surface collection from this site made by Mr. Arnold Svoboda contains arrow points (Figure 1) and pottery. The pottery specimens include Goose Creek and Rockport types. Some of the Rockport pottery may be associated with historic Indians who are usually associated with the central Texas coast (Suhm and Jelks 1962:135). Rockport pottery has been found on a historic Indian site in Wharton County (Hudgins 1982). The Goose Creek pottery may be related to Late Prehistoric and/or Early Historic period Indians.

Except for one Perdiz point, all of the arrow points shown in Figure 1 were found at Site 41BO167. Two of the Perdiz points (Figure 1, bottom right) could be associated with Late Prehistoric and/or Early Historic period Indians. The top row of Figure 1 illustrates Cuney arrow points

with expanding stems (Suhm and Jelks 1962:271) that have been associated with Historic period Indians at one site in Wharton County (Hudgins 1982). The bulbar-stemmed arrow point type in Figure 1 (bottom left) has also been associated with this same historic Indian site in Wharton County.

The site is located at the highest point on the west side of Damon Mound, overlooking the surrounding prairie for several miles in all directions. Native grasses cover the site and it is void of trees or brush. There is a deep gully about 400 yards north of the site that has its beginning near the top of the mound and drains into a shallow basin near the bottom. Until recently, the basin contained a dependable source of water (Svoboda 1988). The location of the site offers no protection from north winds and probably would not have been suitable for occupation during the winter months.

Mr. Svoboda and Joe Hudgins visited Site 41BO167 to conduct a further survey. Two shovel tests, six meters apart, were done on the site. Each test was about 0.25 meter in diameter and screening was done with a 1/4-inch mesh screen.

Both tests revealed a dark brown sandy soil beginning at the surface and continuing to a depth of 35 cm. From 35 to 60 cm there was a light brown sandy soil. Below this depth was sterile clay. All artifacts recovered were found in the first 35 cm in the dark brown sandy soil. One complete Cuney point was found, similar to the fourth one from the left in the top row of Figure 1. One bone fragment (5 cm in length and 2.5 cm wide) recovered was from a piece of longitudinally split bone which was notched on the lateral edges, suggesting that it may have been used for hafting some object. Also found were 10 potsherds, three resembling Rockport type, with the remaining sherds unclassified.

The Svoboda farm collection

The Svoboda farm is located about 4 miles east of Damon. A collection of prehistoric artifacts has been made from the farm fields at Site 41FB158. This site appears to have been located along a former creek bed that is indicated by a band of light-colored sand that passes through the farm fields.

The entire Svoboda collection is shown in Figure 2, and a summary of projectile points that can be classified is given in Table 1. A number of miscellaneous biface fragments are also shown in Figure 2. The Late Paleo-Indian period is represented by Angostura-like (left) and Plainview (right) points shown in Figure 3 and an Early Side-Notched point shown in Figure 4. These points all have ground basal edges. The Archaic period is represented by Bulverde-like, Ensor, Gary, Pedernales, triangular, Kent, Yarbrough, Ellis and Darl dart point types. Some of these dart point types are also found in the Early Ceramic period, but perhaps not at this location as no ceramic specimens were found here. Only one Perdiz arrow point of all of the arrow points shown in Figures 1 and 2 is from the Svoboda farm collection, so that only a minor Late Prehistoric component is indicated here.

Summary

Surveys made at Damon Mound and surrounding areas demonstrate a long prehistoric occupation sequence for this general area, from the Late Paleo-Indian period through the Late Prehistoric. Historic Indians are also represented by both archeological and historic records. Surveys of this type are important to give a more uniform regional coverage for the archeological data base.

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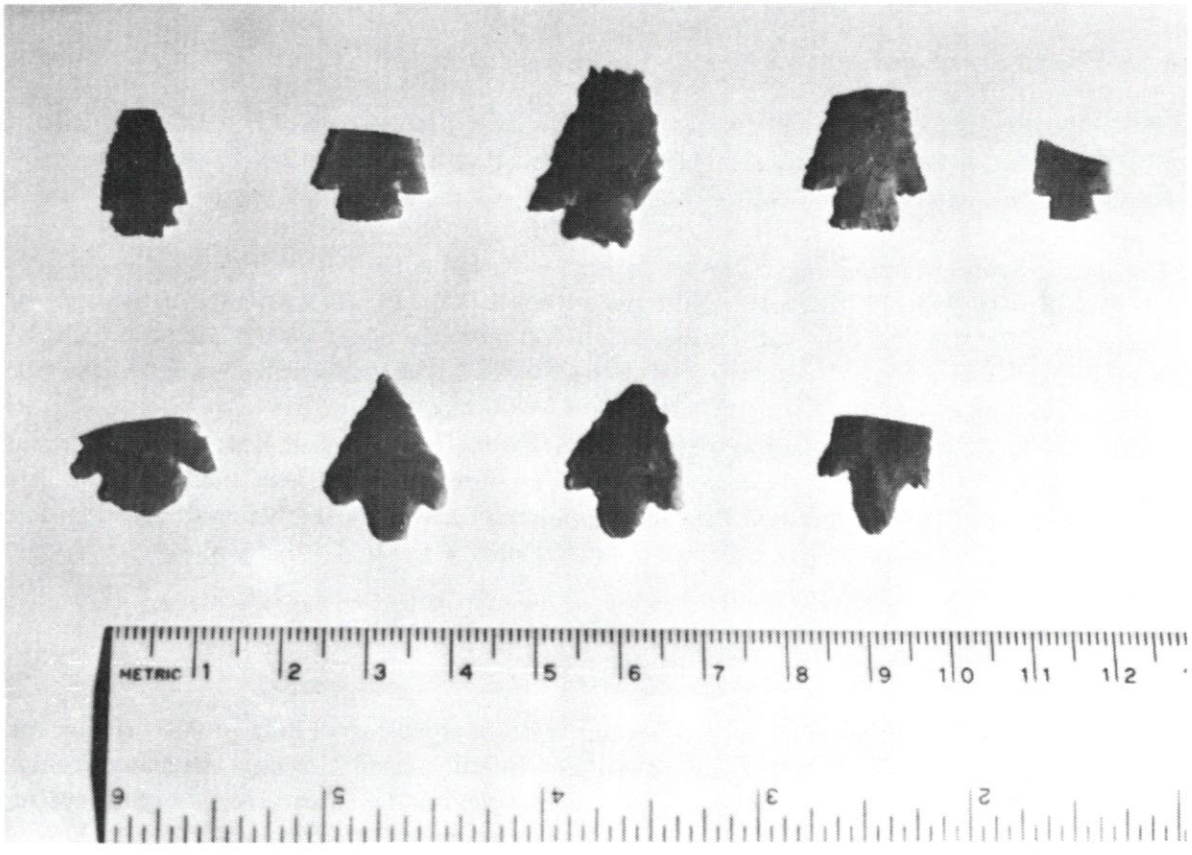

Figure 1. Svoboda collection arrow points

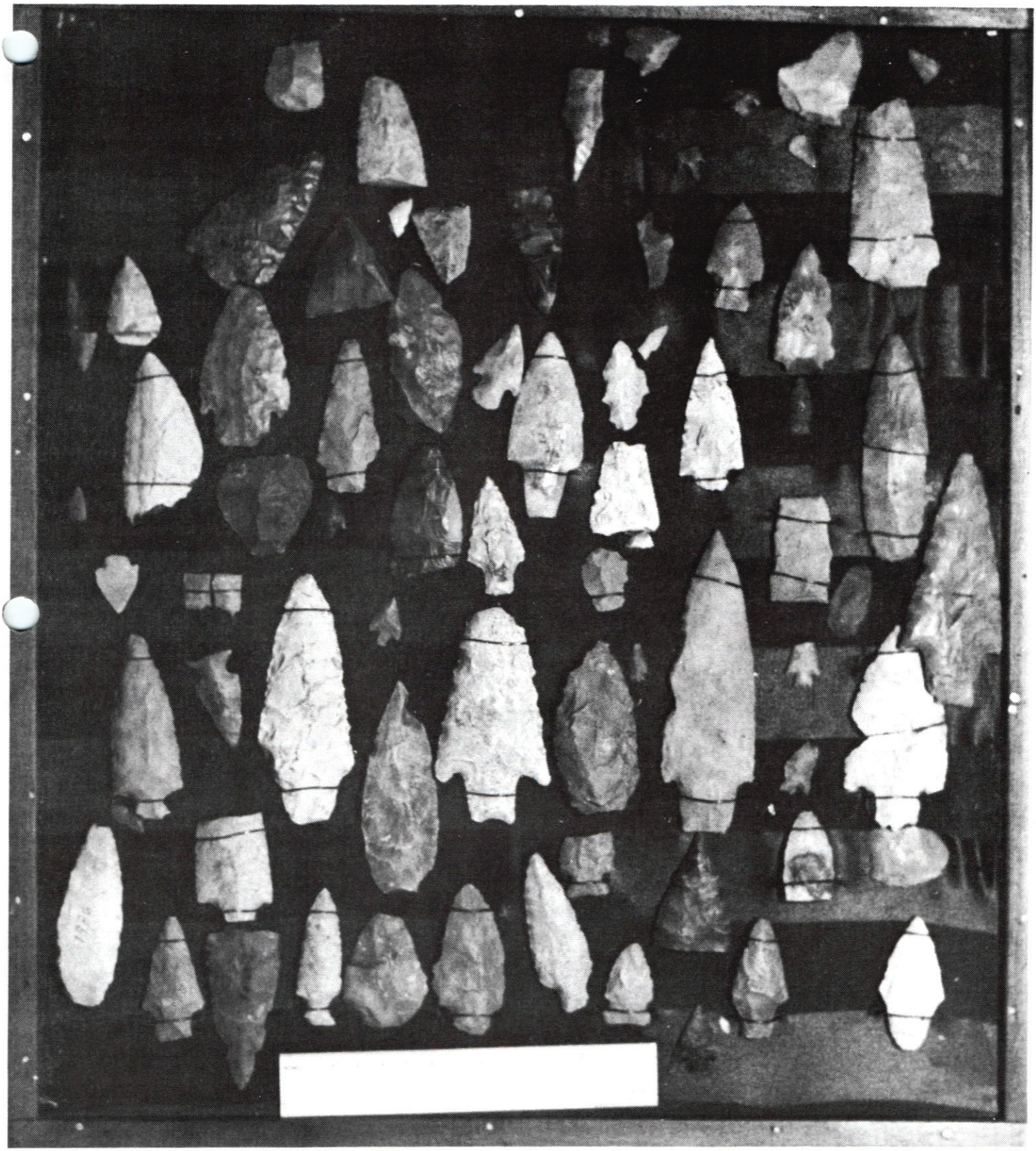

Figure 2. Svoboda farm collection

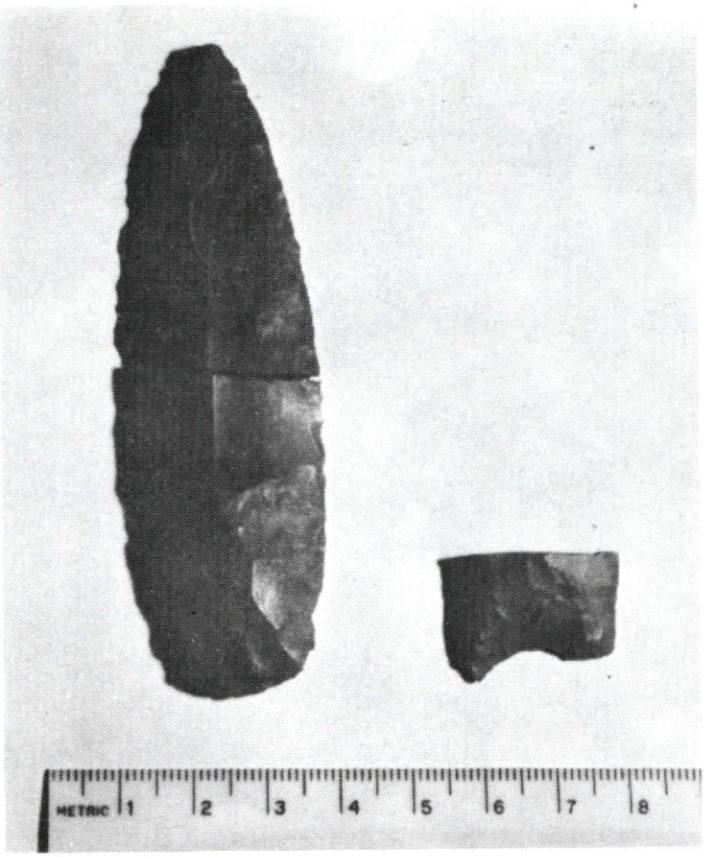

Figure 3. Angostura-like and Plainview points

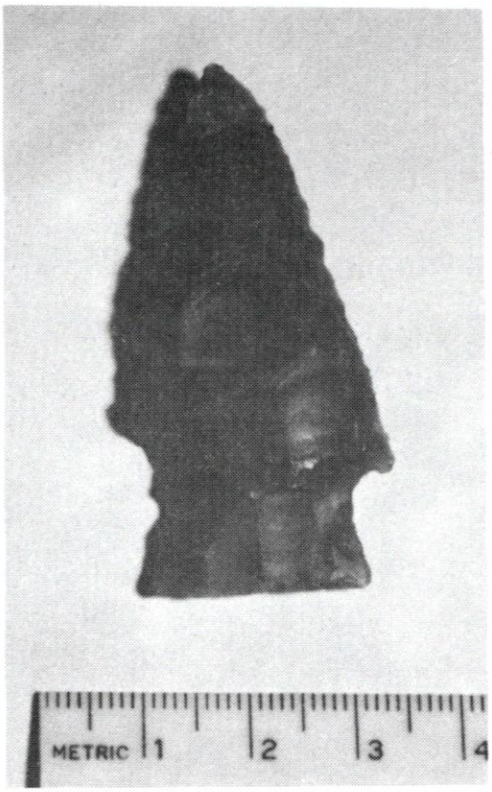

Figure 4. Early Side-Notched point

Table 1. Svoboda farm projectile points

Type	No.
Plainview	1
Angostura-like	1
Early Side-notched	1
Bulverde-like	7
Ensor	3
Gary	5
Pedernales	1
triangular	3
Kent	5
Yarbrough	1
Ellis	1
Darl	1
Perdiz	1
preform	6
unclassified	7

Early Projectile Points from 41HR290, Harris Co., Texas

W. L. McClure and L. W. Patterson

Introduction

Site 41HR290 was found by McClure in 1975 during a survey of White Oak Bayou in Harris County, Texas. During the next few years, repeated visits to the site yielded a small amount of lithic debris and a few dart points that were exposed and displaced by erosion. The material appeared to be originating in the silty clay just above a calcareous stratum and below the topsoil. The presence of San Patrice dart points along with the absence of ceramics was instrumental in the decision of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to arrange to test the site as part of their investigation of White Oak Bayou. The work was accomplished by Prewitt and Associates in 1986. The lithics that had been recovered by McClure were turned over to Prewitt and Associates, but, unfortunately, the dart points that had been collected by McClure had been misplaced. The other lithics were turned over to Prewitt and Associates.

No evidence of the site remained in 1986 (Fields 1988:53-57). The collection of lithic debris made by McClure included one initial-reduction biface fragment (Fields 1988:166) and 36 chips and flakes (Fields 1988:179). The dart points have now been relocated and are the subject of this report. The points will be delivered to the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory in Austin for permanent curation.

The known number of prehistoric sites that include early occupation components is increasing in Southeast Texas (Patterson 1983). San Patrice points have recently been recorded from sites 41HR273, 41HR282 and 41HR283, all located on White Oak Bayou (Fields 1988:146-148). The artifacts recovered from site 41HR290 appear to represent some portion of the Late Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic periods. No artifacts that would indicate later occupations have been found.

Projectile points

Four projectile points have been found on site 41HR290 that indicate early occupations that cover some portion of the Late Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic time periods. The Late Paleo-Indian period has a time range of approximately 10,000 to 7000 years before present (B.P.) and the Early Archaic period has a time range of approximately 7000 to 5000 years B.P. (Patterson 1979:106).

These projectile points are shown in Figure 1. All specimens have ground basal edges, which is a typical attribute for early dart point types. The Late Paleo-Indian period is represented by a San Patrice point (Figure 1B), a San Patrice variant (Figure 1C) and a small Early Notched point (Figure 1D). San Patrice points have been identified with the Late Paleo-Indian period for some time (Webb et al. 1971), and a San Patrice point has been found in the Late Paleo-Indian level of excavations at site 41WH19 in Wharton County (Patterson and Hudgins 1985, Figure 3; Patterson et al. 1987:Figure 9). Early Notched points also have been identified as being from the Late Paleo-Indian period in Texas (Patterson and Hudgins 1985; Patterson et al. 1987) and Louisiana (Webb et al. 1971). The Early Notched point from this site is similar to the later Ellis type, but this specimen has a ground base which is an attribute not found on Ellis point specimens.

The Early Archaic period is represented here by a Carrollton point (Figure 1A). Carrollton points were found in the Early Archaic level in excavations at site 41HR315 in Harris County (Patterson 1980). In Fort Bend County a Carrollton-like point was recovered at site 41FB37 from a level that has been radiocarbondated at 6490 ±120 years B.P. (Patterson 1988).

Summary

Projectile point specimens from site 41HR290 indicate occupations in the Late Paleo-Indian and Early Archaic periods. This site can be added to the increasing list of known sites in Southeast Texas that have early occupation components. The projectile point types found at this site are all typical of types found in this region for these periods.

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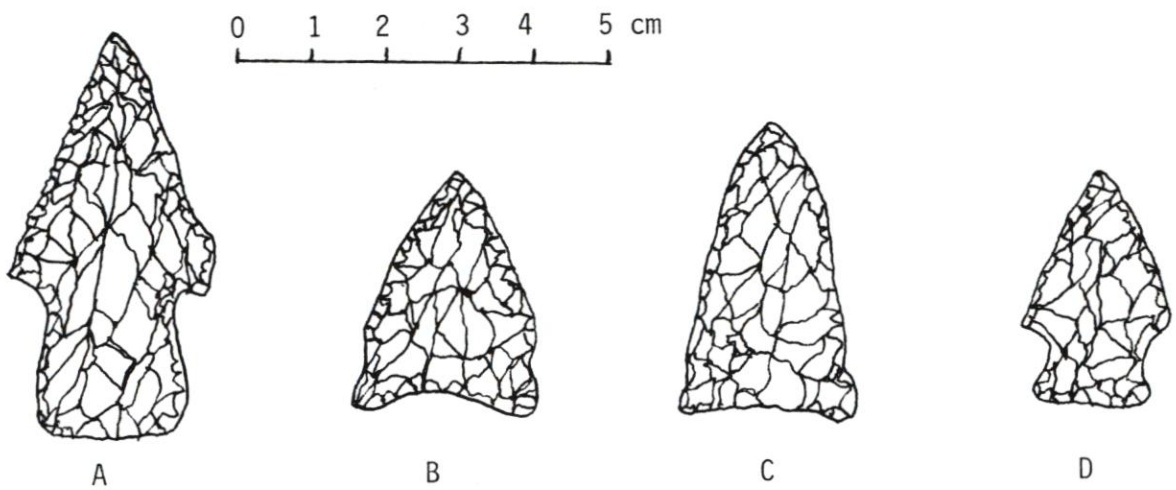

A – Carrollton, B – San Patrice, C – San Patrice variant, D – Early Notched

Figure 1. Site 41HR290 projectile points

A Long Occupation Sequence at 41WH78, Wharton Co., Texas

L. W. Patterson and J. D. Hudgins

Introduction

This article describes archeological survey work at prehistoric Site 41WH78 in north-central Wharton County, Texas. This site was originally found and recorded by Joe Hudgins. Artifact types found at this location indicate that this is another site that can be added to the increasing list of sites in Southeast Texas that have very long occupation sequences (Patterson 1983), from the Paleo-Indian period through the Late Prehistoric.

Site 41WH78 is located on the bend of an abandoned creek bed. The present active creek is located several hundred meters from the site. The general area is a mixture of woodlands and coastal prairie. The location of this site is on a gently sloping ridge, parallel to the old creek bed. The area covered is at least 40 by 100 meters, running from northeast to southwest with the longest dimension along the ridge.

Three separate areas of this site are considered here. Area A, farthest to the southwest, yielded a collection of pottery which represents ceramic occupations. Area B, in the central area of the site, yielded a collection of dart points and other lithic artifacts that represent early pre-ceramic occupations. Area C, farthest to the northeast, is a large area with shallow stratigraphy that appears to represent mainly ceramic period occupations.

Area A

Area A of this site is close to the old creek bed. Sixteen sandy paste sherds and two bone-tempered sherds were found in this area. The sandy paste sherds resemble the Goose Creek type, but are generally better fired, with hard surfaces, than typical Goose Creek pottery. The average thickness of the two bone-tempered sherds is 5.8 mm. The sandy paste sherds have a thickness range of 4.6 to 8.0 mm, and an average of 6.1 mm.

Some chert flakes and cores have been observed in this area. The total time range of occupations of Area A has not been determined, but it is apparent that ceramic occupations are present. An unclassified arrow point (Figure 1A) which represents the Late Prehistoric period was found in Area A or near Area A in Area B.

Area B

Area B is located slightly higher in elevation than Area A. Each of these two areas covers about 25% of the total site area. Prehistoric occupations of Area B appear to include the Late Paleo-Indian period of 10,000 to 7000 years ago (Patterson 1979:105) and perhaps some portion of the following Archaic period. The Late Paleo-Indian period is represented by a Plainview point (Figure 1E) and a Plainview-like base (Figure 1B). One notched point with ground stem edges (Figure 1C) was found that is similar to certain Late Paleo-Indian points from Site 41WH19 (Patterson et al. 1987:Figure 9) in the same county. Another notched point (Figure 1D) may also be from the Late Paleo-Indian period, but does not have ground stem edges. An unclassified expanding stem dart point (Figure 1H) might be from the Late Paleo-Indian or the Archaic period. Five unclassified dart point fragments were found. One specimen is heat damaged and another specimen may be made from Edwards Plateau flint. One whole dart point preform and 8 preform fragments were recovered in Area B.

Several unifacial stone tools found in Area B are typical of Paleo-Indian assemblages; included are 3 large end scrapers on elongated prismatic flakes (Figure 1F,G,J) and a large prismatic blade that has been utilized as a side scraper (Figure 1I). Two flake gravers (Figure 1K,L) and one miscellaneous bifacial tool were also found in this area.

It has previously been noted for this geographic region that average flake sizes are larger from earlier occupation levels of excavated sites (Patterson 1980:Figure 19; Patterson et al. 1987:Figure 20). The flake size distribution for Area B with Paleo-Indian artifacts is consistent with this concept, with 86.8% of the flakes over 20 mm square in size. No flakes of sizes under 15 mm square were found in Area B, but this is probably due only to the conditions of surface collecting, because many small flakes should also be present. One unretouched prismatic blade with a width of 12.1 mm was found in Area B.

Other indications of lithic manufacturing activities in Area B include 2 small quartzite hammerstones, 1 large quartzite hammerstone fragment, 2 miscellaneous chert cores and 1 chert nodule with transverse parallel flaking.

Some small chert nodules can be found in the general area of Site 41WH78, but lithic raw materials to manufacture large projectile points were probably imported from the Colorado River drainage system, possibly from the Eagle Lake area about 14 miles away. There was remaining cortex on 41.5% of the flakes in Area B. This high percentage of cortex on flakes probably indicates some importation of chert nodules, compared to importation of trimmed flakes made at the raw material source (Patterson 1981).

Area C

Area C covers about 50% of the total site area on the northeast end. Five widely spaced shovel tests were done here on July 10, 1988 by the authors, since only a small amount of artifacts had been found on the surface. The shovel tests covered areas of about 0.25 square meter each. Each test was done on 0-10 and 10-20 cm levels before finding sterile clay. Caliche was found at 14 to 18 cm depths in the various shovel tests. All soil was put through a 1/4-inch mesh screen. Although two excavation levels were used, the materials recovered were similar for both levels, and summaries given combine materials recovered from both levels.

Two sandy paste sherds were recovered in Area C, indicating at least some ceramic occupation of this area.

Recovery of freshwater shellfish remains varied from 6 to 157 grams in the various test pits, with a total of 215 grams of shell recovered for Area C. Shellfish do not appear to have been utilized on a large scale as a food resource here.

A total of 286 chert flakes were recovered from the shovel tests in Area C. The flake size distributions for Area B and Area C are shown in Table 1. In contrast to 86.8% of total flakes over 20 mm square in Area B, there were only 14.9% of total flakes over 20 mm square in Area C. This small percentage of large flakes in Area C is an indication that this area represents mainly ceramic occupations. In contrast to 41.5% of flakes with remaining cortex in Area B, only 25.4% of the flakes in Area C had remaining cortex. This shows that more trimmed raw materials were brought to Area C than to Area B. Twelve small chunks of worked chert, a quartzite pebble fragment and a small chert nodule (50 mm diameter) were also found, as further indication of lithic manufacturing activity in Area C.

The flake size distribution for Area C is not a true exponential curve, which would be a straight line on log-log graph paper, but is fairly close to this curve form except for the end points. This possibly shows that much of the debitage from Area C is the result of manufacturing of bifaces, such as projectile points. The flake size distribution from manufacturing a biface is generally an

exponential curve form (Patterson 1982). Even when debitage from an archeological site is primarily from manufacturing of bifaces, it is common for the data point for the smallest size flakes not to be on a straight line with other data points when the flake size distribution is plotted on log-log graph paper. This is because of the difficulty in recovery of very small flakes.

The nature of the collection of artifacts from Area C indicates that mainly ceramic and perhaps Late Archaic occupations were present here, similar to Area A.

Summary

The surface collection in Area A and the shovel test results in Area C indicate that these two areas of Site 41WH78 had occupations in mainly the ceramic time periods, probably after A.D. 100. Artifacts from Area B are mainly from the Late Paleo-Indian period and perhaps also from the Early Archaic. The exact nature of Archaic period occupations at this site has not yet been determined.

Site 41WH78 has a large surface area, with various subareas of the site used at different times by nomadic hunter-gatherers, probably on a seasonal basis. Freshwater shellfish remains are present, but shellfish appears to have been a minor dietary item at this location.

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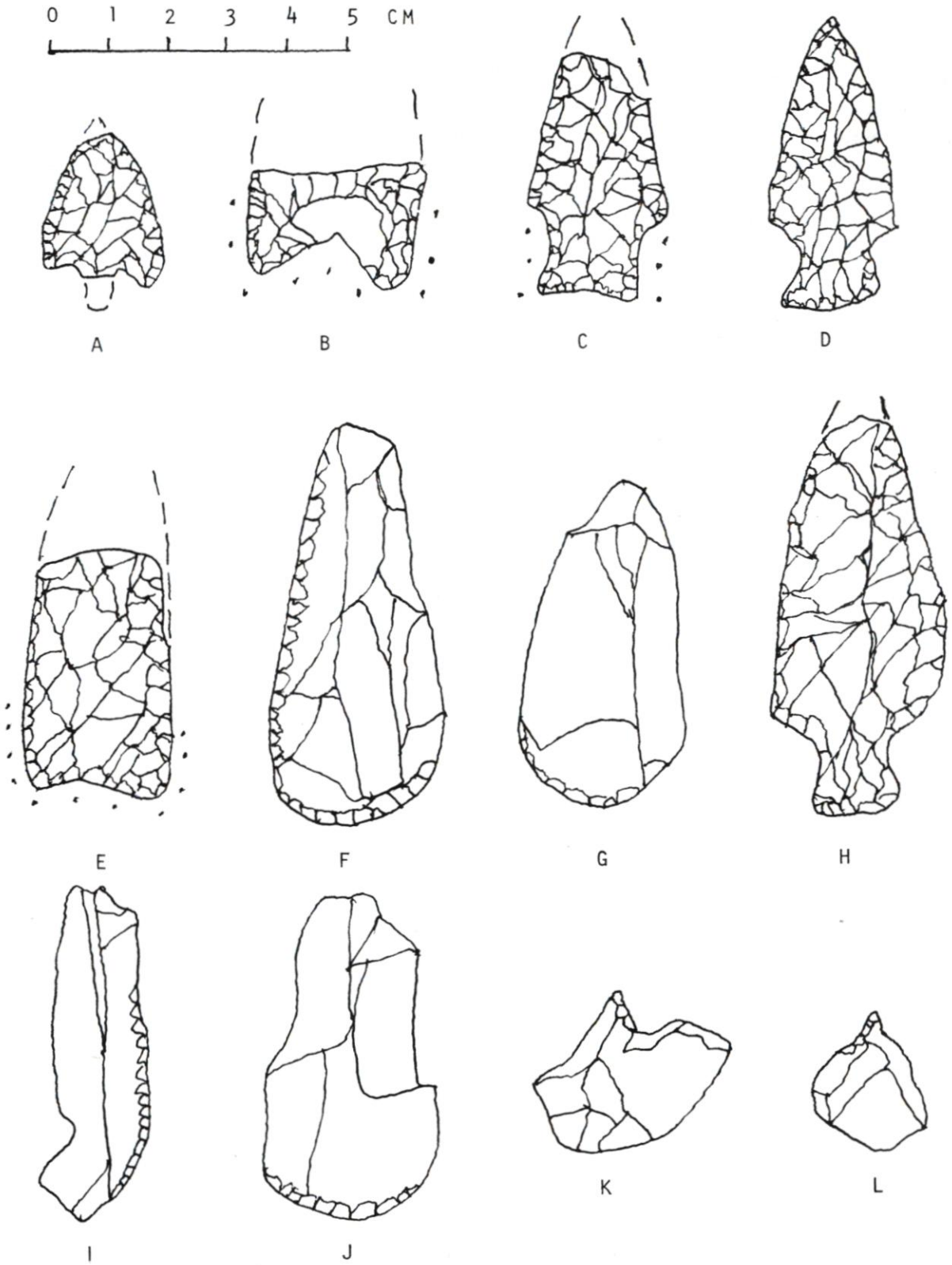
Table 1. 41WH78 Flake Size Distribution

Size,	Area B		Area C	
mm sq.	no.	%	no.	%
under 15	0	0	161	56.3
15–20	7	13.2	82	28.8
20–25	14	26.4	29	10.1
25–30	17	32.1	11	3.8
30–35	9	17.0	3	1.0
35–40	1	1.9	0	0
40–50	5	9.4	0	0
total	53	100.0	286	100.0



A – arrow point; B – Plainview-like point; C – Early Notched point; D – Early Notched point (?); E – Plainview point; F,G,J – end scrapers; H – unclassified point; I – side scraper on blade; K,L – gravers; dots show ground edges

Figure 1. Site 41WH78 lithic artifacts

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