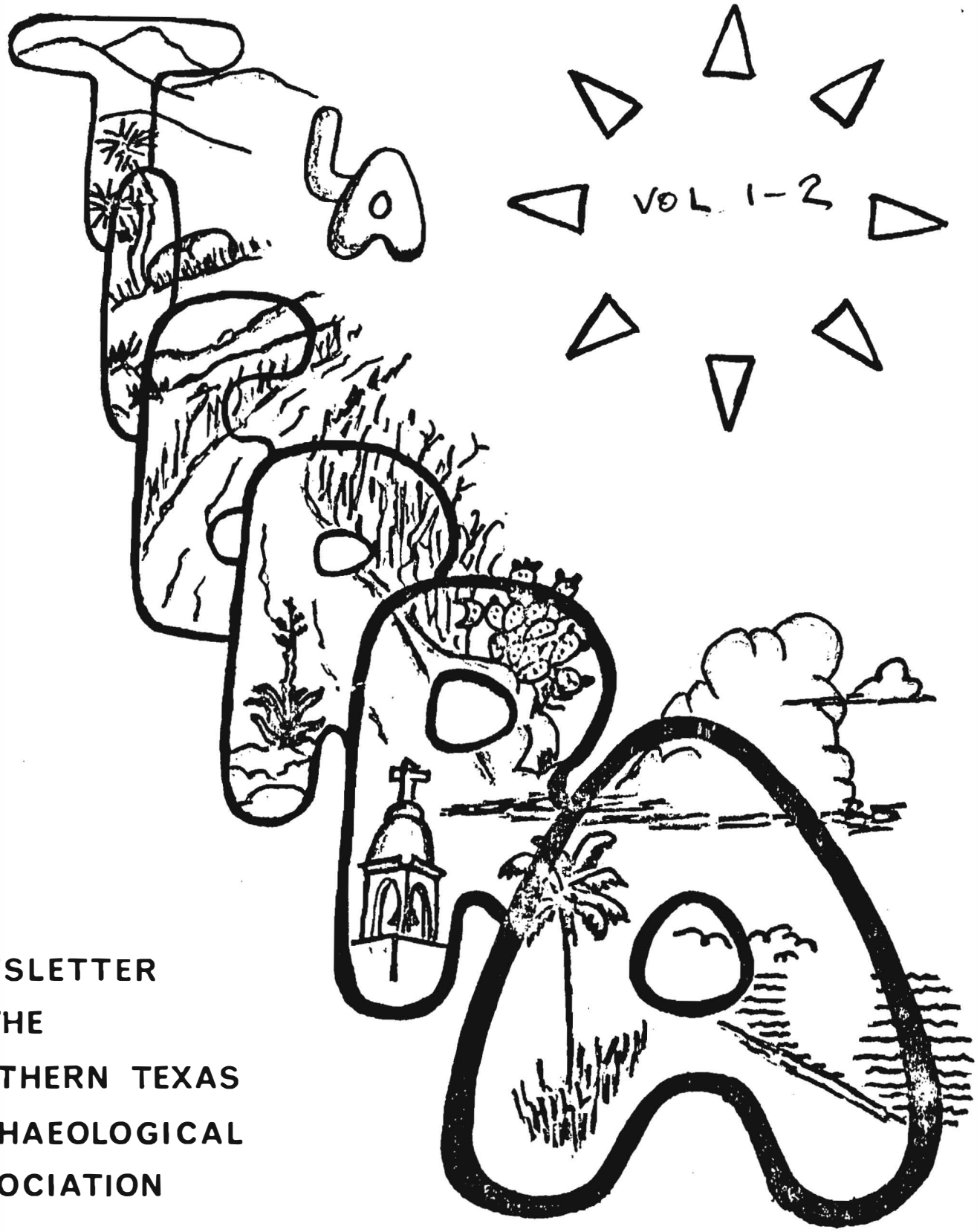

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN TEXAS ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

LA TIERRA

Quarterly Newsletter of the Southern Texas Archaeological Association

Volume 1, Number 2
April, 1974

T. C. Hill, Jr.
Newsletter Editor

La Tierra is distributed quarterly to members of the Southern Texas Archaeological Association. For membership information, contact the Treasurer.

Manuscripts and other items for the newsletter should be submitted to T. C. Hill, Jr., Box 518, Crystal City, Texas 78839.

REMARKS FROM THE EDITOR

"There will be no newsletter which reports: "The STAA met, had coffee and cookies, saw a ripping film, etc."" Remember that statement?

The STAA had a wonderful, exciting two-day meeting in San Antonio in mid-March, and at the risk of breaking my promise, I must talk about it. Well over half of the membership attended, and those who missed it just should have been there.

103 persons registered for the Saturday afternoon show, and 32 new ones were signed up, creating a total membership at that time of 180! Seventy folks attended Dr. Hester's orientation lecture Saturday night, and an incredible 60 signed up for the Sunday dig at the official STAA sites along nearby Salado Creek.

Five speakers did their thing on Saturday afternoon, after a short business meeting. These included Anne Fox, with slides, on "Old Lime Kilns", an STAA effort in progress; Gene Griffin on "High School Anthropology", telling how he's being swamped by intelligent, interested students; Col. Thomas Kelly on "A Paleolithic Excavation in England" with slides and beautiful ancient artifacts; and the BIG man, Dr. E. Mott Davis, with his classic presentation, "The Role of the Amateur in Texas Archeology". Dr. Davis comes on strong, but I think he reaches his peak when the bombardment of questions begins...his great big grin and sparkling eyes, his candor and wit as he gives you the True Word, are worth the price of admission, and I hope he'll come back to visit us sometime.

Somewhere in there, they thrust your cottony-mouthed, scared-witless Editor up onto the podium, clutching a sheaf of papers in his palsied hands, to deliver his first, and upon my oath, his last, public paper-reading. Bear with me, gentle reader, I have to cleanse myself of this horror, and you're my only opportunity!

Hiding behind the skirts of a 14 year old Coahuiltec maiden, and speaking through her lips, I told all I'd learned during the past several months about building and firing bone-tempered pottery. This seemed to go off pretty well, and some said they actually enjoyed the little fantasy, proving that it takes precious little to entertain the STAA.

But at the start, I placed my pot-making reputation squarely on the line, by claiming the home-made bowl I held would exhibit a black core between its thin, obviously light-colored walls...this is one of the diagnostics of our Southwest Texas "Leon Plain-like" bone tempered sherds. Thank Heavens, when I broke that bowl it came out just like I predicted, or else my "speech" would have ended right there with me sprinting briskly for the back exit.

There were a number of interesting exhibits, my own amounting to 5-6 cooked and raw pots which I felt fairly proud of, up to the time Mr. E.R. Bly showed me three perfect Caddo specimens, brown pasteboard-thin incised beauties, the first of which I'd had the opportunity to fondle and inspect. Thereafter, I disclaimed any knowledge or interest in those "dirtdauber nests" of mine, over in the corner... when folks asked about them, I declared I didn't know, but they must have been constructed by a swarm of tequila-swilling wasps which weren't too stable to start with.

The Officers and Board spent a good deal of time hashing over a number of problems which had not been firmly settled, and we feel we are now about ready to present to the organization a charter and by-laws for its own brand of hashing. These are printed below, and you'll notice they're deliberately kept fairly low-key and elastic, to take advantage of the inherent, in-bred honesty and good habits of our STAA membership.

A note: As we "leaders" met and met and MET, I spent a lot of time looking around the room at my fellow officers, who are all busy, qualified people, who are offering their time and knowledge toward organizing STAA, and wondered: "What is in it for them?" Meaning, Dr. Hester and Mary Francis and Anne and C.K. and the two Harveys, and all the rest. Later, observing the deep interest and attention and courtesy of those attending the speeches and workshop instructions, the answer began to penetrate, a little. Everybody stands to win from this venture...it's that simple. And the excitement is pretty large, throughout.

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Our first La Tierra came on strong, as you may have noticed, and is now absolutely extinct...there are none left. They went out to all the members and to some excellent people we felt might take the bait and join up if we prodded them a bit, and to a number of libraries including Peabody at Harvard University. But don't fret, newer members, Vol. 1, No. 1 is getting itself re-run, right away...when you paid your dues you bought the ENTIRE bundle, and we mean to see to it that you get the chance to read Patterson, Mitchell, McGuff, Smith, Fawcett, and Hester at their very best. (I don't know...had a hunch that that first La Tierra might score, but a complete sell-out and a second printing? Too much!)

We've had real good reactions from far away, to that first issue, particularly from the El Paso Archeological Society, who said, "We love your STAA and your Tierra...would you consider an exchange deal, your newsletters and journals, for ours?" WOULD we? But you'll probably lose, El Paso...your monthly letters and quarterly Artifact are established matters of fact, really "quality" reporting, and we'll have to work to live up to your expectations.

The El Paso publications will go into the official STAA library, to be catalogued and doled out by Col. Ned Harris of San Antonio. And listen, you authors who have written and published anything concerning our district or its surrounding areas, get busy and bale-up and ship to Col. Harris all the reprints you can part with, and do it right away. We'll also appreciate any original publications, books, ANYTHING which might have to do with our problems. And if you don't have any reprints or books, then just go on and send some MONEY to our Secretary, and we'll buy some books! This project needs starting at once.

Forms to be used in the reporting of sites are available, many have been distributed, and the difficult chore of recording these reports (as well as large local collections) is now in process. Get in touch with the Secretary (Anne Fox, Witte Museum, San Antonio) for forms, and send them back to her. I understand they will be copied and then sent on to the big site-recording center at TARL, where they'll be checked out and the official State numbers assigned (41-ZV-72, or whatever). It is hugely important that we commence this effort at once. I would suggest that each site-reporter also keep a copy for his own files... I've reported a number of sites out here in Zavala County, to TARL, and never bothered to keep a copy! (I know, tarring and feathering is too GOOD for me!) Oh, I have a detailed list and can go back to each site unerringly, but the old

mind tends to become fuzzy with time's passage, concerning the details of all those sites, and who knows, somebody might show up ten years from now with $10,000 and a hot notion to excavate your 41-ZV-72, and all you could do would be to stand there and stammer! And that would be inexcusable.

We all love the fun of getting out and looking around in the brush, but somewhere along the way we have to pay the price...that amounts to good accurate site-reporting, artifact-catalogueing, and all those other dreary jobs upon which depend the eventual clues to "How It Was in La Tierra".

T. C. Hill, Jr.

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF JUNE QUARTERLY MEETING

The STAA will hold its second quarterly meeting of the year on June 1-2, 1974. The meeting will take place in the auditorium of the John F. Kennedy High School, 1922 South Gen. McMullen Drive, San Antonio, Texas. This location is in southwestern San Antonio; persons coming in on Interstate 35 should take Highway 90 to the S. Gen. McMullen exit. The school is south of Highway 90.

There will be a $1.00 registration fee at the door. Displays may be set up on tables to be provided at the auditorium. Members wishing to present papers should contact Mr. Gene Griffin (STAA Program Chairman), 5723 Stonybrook, San Antonio, Texas. Please get in touch with Gene at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

TENTATIVE PROGRAM

Saturday, June 1, 1974

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Registration
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.	General business meeting
2:00 - 3:30 p.m.	Presentation of brief papers by STAA members (limited to 15-20 minutes each)
3:30 - 4:00 p.m.	Coffee break
4:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Special Lecture: Dr. Dee Ann Story, (Executive Director, Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory, The University of Texas at Austin) will speak on "The Uses and Misuses of Radiocarbon Dating, With Special Reference to the George C. Davis Site". Dr. Story's presentation promises to be very informative, dealing largely with the methods used by archaeologists to interpret radiocarbon dates. She will also discuss other techniques of dating archaeological remains.
5:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Dinner break; sandwiches will be catered (optional)
6:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Workshop

1) Suhm, D.A. and E.B. Jelks (1962) Handbook of Texas Archeology: Type Descriptions. Available in limited quantities, at $9.00 per copy, from: Witte Museum, 3801 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas.

2) Bell, R.E. and G. Perino, A Guide to the Identification of Certain American Indian Projectile Points. Four separate volumes (two edited by Bell and two by Perino) each containing illustrations and descriptions of 50 projectile point types. Available at $4.00 per volume from Secretary-Treasurer, Oklahoma Anthropological Society, Oklahoma Archeological Survey, 1335 S. Asp, Norman, Oklahoma 73069.

3) Heizer, R. and J. Graham (1967) A Guide to Field Methods in Archaeology. National Press, Palo Alto, California. May be ordered through your local bookstore, at about $11.00 per copy.

4) Robbins, M. and M.B. Irving (1965) The Amateur Archaeologist's Handbook. Thomas Y. Crowell, New York. May be ordered through your local bookstore, at $6.95 per copy.

5) Inglis, J.M., A History of Vegetation on the Rio Grande Plain. (a well written volume on the distribution of vegetation and wildlife in southern Texas in the early historic era) Available at about $2.00 per copy from: Texas Parks and Wildlife, J.H. Reagan Office Bldg., Austin, Texas 78701. Ask for Bulletin #45.

6) Newcomb, W.W., Jr. (1961) The Indians of Texas. The University of Texas, Austin. Available in hardcover (and in a new paperbound edition $2.95) through your local bookstore.

7) "Point-Type Poster". 35" x 45" wall poster illustrating the major types of projectile points found in Texas and bordering states. Available for $2.50 from West Texas State University Anthropological Society, Box 884, WT Station, Canyon, Texas 79015.

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SOME OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- Archeology and Archeological Resources, a publication of the Society for American Archaeology; available for 50¢ from M.F. Chadderdon, STAA Treasurer, 4002 Glenrock, San Antonio 78240.

- Bulletin of the Lower Plains Archeological Society. Recently issued, and containing papers on the archaeology of south Texas, central Texas, the Panhandle, and New Mexico. Only $1.00 per copy; order from Aaron Riggs, Jr., 119 N. Dewberry, Midland, Texas (Mr. Riggs also has available at $1.00 per copy, the Transactions of the 9th Regional Archeological Symposium for Southeastern New Mexico and Western Texas. There are 152 pages in this volume; of particular interest is the account of the "Early Man" symposium which took place during the annual meeting of the Southwest Federation of Archaeological Societies.)

TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

Several members have inquired about the purchase of topographic maps of southern Texas. These maps are quite valuable for plotting the locations of sites. A free index of available maps may be obtained from: U.S. Geological Survey, Publications Division, Denver Distribution Section, Denver Federal Center Bldg. 41, Denver, Colorado 80225.

JOURNAL OF SOUTH TEXAS

Dr. Richard Moore, of the Department of History, Del Mar College, Corpus Christi, is the editor of a new journal slated to appear this summer. The Journal of South Texas will publish papers on the history and archaeology of the southern Texas region. Persons wishing to place a standing order for the first issue should write to Dr. Moore.

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STAA LIBRARY

During the meeting in March, it was agreed to set up an STAA lending-library. Through the library, publications on archaeology, particularly south Texas archaeology, can be made available to the general membership. The STAA librarian is Lt. Col. E. S. (Ned) Harris, 2158 West Kings Highway, San Antonio. Col. Harris will gladly accept donations, in the form of books and reprints, to be added to the library collection (or, if anyone wishes to make monetary donations, these will be used to purchase additional volumes for the library). STAA members wishing to borrow items from the library should write directly to Col. Harris. A small fee will be assessed to help pay for postage, but there are no other charges for using the library. Although the library is in its beginning phases, there are a number of items now available for loan to the interested members and a sampling of these appears below. Col. Harris will be using future issues of La Tierra to inform the members of new additions to the library. If there is a certain book or paper that you would like to read or need for your research, contact Col. Harris and he will try to track it down.

Some current holdings: Drucker, "Stratigraphy in Archaeology"; Hester, (ed.) "Archaeological Papers presented to J.W. House"; Fawcett, "The Prehistory of Bexar County"; Hester and Rodgers, "Additional Data on the Burial Practices of the Brownsville Complex"; Hester and others, "A Functional Analysis of 'Clear Fork' Artifacts from the Rio Grande Plain"; Hester, White and White,"Archaeological Materials from the Oulline Site...LaSalle County, Texas"; Hester, "Folsom Points from Southwest Texas"; Hester, "Human Bone Artifacts from Southern Texas"; Hester, "Paleo-Indian Artifacts...San Miguel Creek"; Hester,"Surface Archaeology... Duval County", Mitchell, "A Paleo-Indian Point from South Texas"; Sollberger and Hester, "Strohacker Site..."(Kerr County); Wingate and Hester, "Ten Burials from Green Lake, Texas"; Hester and Stross (eds.), "Ethnographic Information on the Comanches..."; Fawcett, "Prehistoric Site Models...Leon Creek Archeological Survey, Bexar County, Texas"; Hester, "Loyola Beach..."(Kleberg County).

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LA SALLE COUNTY SITES

STAA members J. L. Mitchell and A. J. Hoover have recently reported four new sites in southern La Salle County. Site record forms have been filled out and placed on file with the STAA Secretary and with the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, Austin. STAA members are encouraged to document unreported sites; forms can be obtained by writing to the STAA Secretary, Anne Fox, Witte Museum, San Antonio.

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STAA MEMBERSHIP

The STAA now has over 190 members. A full membership list will appear in La Tierra later this year.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
OF
THE SOUTHERN TEXAS ARCHEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Article I

The name of this "Association" shall be:
"The Southern Texas Archeological Association."

Article II

(a) The purpose of this association shall be to bring together persons with an active interest in the archeology and prehistoric heritage of Southern Texas in an atmosphere conducive to the exchange of information and ideas;

(b) To promote scientific archeological investigation and documentation;

(c) To preserve the archeological materials and records of the region;

(d) and to interpret and publish data attendant thereto.

Article III

(a) Membership shall be extended to all persons who are in agreement with the purposes of the association and by payment of the prescribed annual dues.

(b) All members shall agree to abide by the following statement of ethics:

"I pledge that I will not intentionally violate the terms and conditions of any Texas Antiquities Statutes, as same now exist, or shall be hereafter amended or enacted, or engage in the practice of buying or selling artifacts for commercial purposes or engage in the willful destruction or distortion of archeological data or disregard proper archeological field techniques."

(c) Meetings shall be held four times per year at a location designated by the board of directors and the board of directors will be empowered to call special meetings when necessary.

Article IV

The government of the association shall be vested in a Board of Directors consisting of the following officers: Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and Programs Chairman; and additional board members consisting of the chairmen of appointed committees in existence at time of any regular or special meeting.

A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Chairman not less than thirty days prior to the annual business meeting.

Article V

The officers shall be elected by popular vote annually and will serve for one year. The first meeting of the calendar year will be the annual business meeting, at which time officers will be elected and take office. In the event any of the Directors cannot serve after elected, the Board will appoint a member to serve the remaining term of office.

BY-LAWS

Article I

Memberships will be as follows:

Supporting	$20.00
Contributing	$10.00
Active	$ 5.00
High School Student	$ 3.00
Institutional	$ 5.00
Family	$10.00

Dues are payable anytime, but if not paid before January 1 of the following year, will be considered delinquent. Delinquent members will not be permitted to participate in association activities.

Article II

Officers must be members in good standing.

Article III

The Chairman shall not authorize any non-budgeted expenditure in excess of $50.00 without approval of the board.

Article IV

The Chairman will appoint committees at such time that committees are deemed necessary. All committees appointed by the Chairman shall cease to exist upon the expiration of that Chairman's term of office unless specifically requested to continue their organization and purpose by the Chairman Elect.

Article V

This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote of the members present at any business meeting, provided the membership has been notified at least thirty days prior to the meeting of intention to amend and the nature of the proposed amendment.

Editor's Note: This is a draft version of the STAA Constitution and By-Laws, and it was provisionally accepted at the March meeting. The draft printed here will be presented for discussion and final approval at the June meeting. C.K. Chandler (Houston) is responsible for most of the work that went into the preparation of this document.

AN UNFLUTED FOLSOM-LIKE PROJECTILE POINT FROM WEBB COUNTY, SOUTHERN TEXAS

Jimmy L. Mitchell

This brief note reports an exceptionally large Folsom-like projectile point from Webb County, Texas. The term "Folsom-like" is used reluctantly; however, it is the best description of the basal attributes of this unusual specimen. It was discovered along the Rio Grande less than ten miles above Laredo, Texas, and now is in the collection of Mr. Charles D. Johnson who lives in rural LaSalle County near Cotulla.

This point was observed during a visit to the Johnson home in late 1972. An exceptional fluted point from this collection has been reported previously (Mitchell and Winsch 1973:9) and additional Paleo-Indian materials belonging to Mr. Johnson will be the subject of future reports.

A number of Paleo-Indian projectile points have been reported from southern Texas (for example, Sellards 1940; Orchard and Campbell 1954; and Hester 1968a) but only a relatively small number of Folsom points have been noted in the area. Suhm and Jelks (1962:194) illustrate five Folsom points from the Kincaid site in Uvalde County and observe that the largest specimens of the type were from this area (80 mm. in length versus an average of 40 mm.). Hester (1968b:117) reported six Folsom points from Dimmit and Maverick Counties and cited a 1935 report by Sayles of one "Folsom-like" specimen from Webb County. Sellards (1940:Plate 1) reported Yuma-like points from Bee County, one of which Orchard and Campbell (1954: 454) interpret as an unfluted Folsom, observing that it was "too thin for removal of channel flakes". There have also been recent reports of additional Folsom points by collectors in Dimmit, Webb, Zapata and other south Texas counties (Hester 1974).

The present specimen, shown in Figure 1, is made of a light tan chert which shades into a typical dark brown Edwards flint band in the middle of the specimen. Under magnification there appear to be crystal or fossil inclusions scattered over the surface of the point. It is 119 mm. in length, 31 mm. in maximum width, 17 mm. in base width, and 6 mm. in maximum thickness. The basal concavity is 5 mm. deep and is not smoothed. The lower sides of the point are smoothed to a maximum length of 30 mm. The specimen weighs approximately 24 grams. It has the nipple in the basal concavity which is typical of Folsom points, but it is not fluted.

This point is more than three times as long as the average length of the Folsom points reported by Hester (1968b:117) and almost 40 mm. longer than the largest specimen reported by Suhm and Jelks (1962:193). However, as noted earlier, Suhm and Jelks observed that the larger specimens come from this area of the state. Specimens have been reported in other areas of the United States which are even larger; Prufer and Baby (1963:13) reported a fluted point 138 mm. in length.

This Webb County specimen is also somewhat wider (31 mm. versus 20.7 mm.) and slightly thicker (6 mm. versus 4 mm.) than the Dimmit and Maverick County specimens reported by Hester (1968b:117). This slightly greater thickness may be a function of the point not being fluted and perhaps, as suggested by Orchard and Campbell (1954:454), this may be the result of it being too thin (for its substantial length) for it to have withstood the fluting process.

A specimen as unusual as this one is typically the object of some skepticism. However, there is substantial evidence and opinion that it is an authentic Paleo-Indian artifact. It has the patina which many archaeologists take to be one sign of substantial age. In addition, the specimen was examined by several individuals who have some experience with Paleo-Indian materials who concluded that it was authentic.

There is some suggestion here, based on the comments of Suhm and Jelks and stimulated by this specimen, that there may be significant differences in the size of Folsom points across the state. A serious distributional study which examines mean attribute data for significant differences is much overdue.

My thanks to Mr. Johnson for the opportunity to study this point and to my wife Heidi for the illustration.

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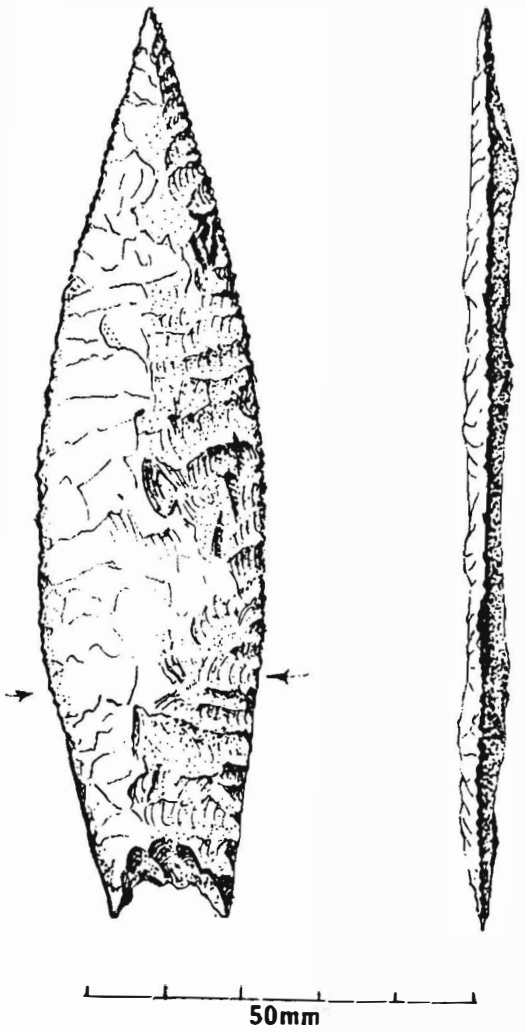

Figure 1. A Folsom-like Projectile Point from Webb County, Texas

THREE SITES IN JIM WELLS COUNTY

L. W. Patterson

Through the kindness of the owner, it has been possible to examine three sites on the Sidney Freeborn ranch in Jim Wells County. These sites are located along Lagarto Creek, in the southern part of Jim Wells County.

Site 41 JW 3 is located about 3000 feet from the creek, on a high dome shaped outcrop, over 200 feet in diameter. This geological formation is unusual for the area, in that it contains what appears to be naturally occuring pebbles of various siliceous materials. This location could have served as a flint source for other sites in the area. The lithic collection corresponds to what might be found at a flint source, where little regular camping activity occured. Aside from a few scattered pieces of burnt limestone, the lithic collection consisted of the following:

Thick flint chips	17
Small flint chips	2
Flint flakes	4
Discoidal core, flint	1
Large flake scraper	1
Thick biface preform, flint	1
Flake core, quartzite	1
Small pointed artifact, quartzite	1

There were no small flakes present to indicate any pressure flaking activity for finished tool making. Large numbers of flint and quartzite pebbles were observed, along with some petrified wood.

Site 41 JW 4 was the largest of the three sites, with lithic artifacts scattered on the surface along several hundred feet of a high creek bank. The lithic assemblage is as follows:

Amorphous flake cores	10
Flint pebbles	3
Flake scraper, petr. wood	1
Biface fragment, basalt	1
Burinized biface fragment, flint	1
Flake burins, flint	3
Flake graver, flint	1
Utilized flakes, flint	7
Thick medium size flakes, flint	23
Flint chips	25
Fine chipping flakes	28

Some of the flint flakes show heat treatment.

In addition to the above, site 41 JW 4 yielded two cores which might be possible amorphous shaped blade cores, with a few blade-shaped facets. There were 8 prismatic blades and blade fragments as follows, with dimensions in millimeters:

	L	W	T	Comments
1	39	17	6	no retouch
2	27	12	2	no retouch
3	30	15	3.5	extensive retouch, all edges
4	24	15	3	truncated distal end, one side notched
5	24	12	5	no retouch
6	17	11	4	distal truncation
7	16	10	2	oblique distal truncation
8	14	9.5	3	distal truncation

All of the above have one dorsal ridge, except No. 7, which has two ridges.

Site 41 JW 5 is located on a sloping high ridge, approximately 4000 feet from the creek, and 100 feet higher. There were a few scattered flint pebbles and flakes, and one Desmuke dart point. This point is shown in Figure 1, and has somewhat irregular chipping on one lateral edge. This point type is typical for this region (Suhm and Jelks 1962:181), and is made of white flint. Figure 1 also shows several other artifacts from these three sites.

None of the sites had any sign of pottery. These three sites are judged to be evidence of late Archaic activities, although not enough material was collected to give a very diagnostic picture.

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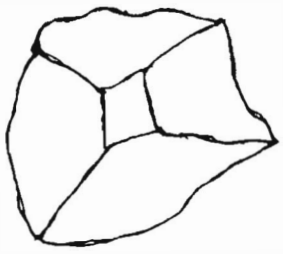
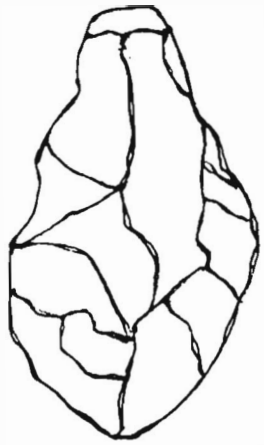
Suhm, D.A., and Edward B. Jelks (1962). Handbook of Texas Archeology: Type Descriptions. The Texas Archeological Society, Special Publication Number One and The Texas Memorial Museum, Bulletin Number Four. Austin.

DESMUKE
POINT
41JW5

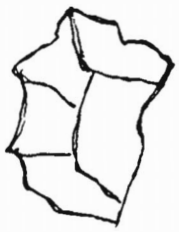


DISCOIDAL
CORE
41JW3

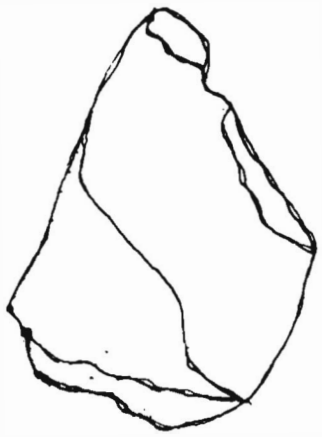


BIFACE
41JW3

FLAKE
BURIN
41JW4



FLAKE
GRAVER
41JW4



SCRAPER
41JW4

RETOUCHED
BLADE
41JW4

TRUNCATED
BLADE
41JW4

WHOLE
BLADE
41JW4

Figure 1. Artifact Examples (All natural size)

THE COAHUILTECAN-SPEAKERS OF THE RIO GRANDE PLAIN OF TEXAS

Ann Kingsbery

The word Coahuiltecan "was first used in a linguistic sense by J.W. Powell... to refer to the related dialects spoken throughout this area (Southern Texas and Northeastern Mexico)" (Troike 1961:57). These bands followed a hunting and gathering mode of living, and Troike points out that they were often at war, and that there is no evidence that they regarded themselves as a single people.

The topography, rainfall and climate, flora, and fauna all vary widely across the regions occupied by the Coahuiltecan-speakers, and the material culture - as archeologists piece it together bit by bit - also shows a wide range of techniques and uses. Is it probable that their real culture was a unified whole, or anything approaching it? A way of life completely dependent on the ecosystem in warmer, drier shelter caves on the Pecos River just couldn't have had much in common with the fishing-and root-grubbing mode of living on the South Texas Gulf Coast. And Zavala, Dimmit, Maverick, Frio and La Salle counties - cut by numerous creeks, three major river systems, and clear sweet fresh-water springs - life there would be vastly different from that in North Central Mexico, hundreds of miles to the south. Yet they have been lumped together in the "ethnic sink" (Swanton 1924) category as: "the Coahuiltecan Indians."

Of course, the behavior patterns of the entire area may have been similar, as Ruecking implies.

Frederick Ruecking's 1954 work, The Coahuiltecan Indians of Southern Texas and Northern Mexico, is an impressively detailed, 270-page treatise. But there are some problems in considering it an accurate reflection of late prehistoric culture in this area.

First, the Coahuiltecans were almost obliterated, and their culture (or cultures) along with them, by 1800 (Ruecking 1955:73), leaving no modern descendents from whom ethnographic material could be obtained. Those who survived war, slaving expeditions, and smallpox epidemics were absorbed into the culture created by their conquerors (Holdsworth 1973). So we must rely for ethnohistoric data on accounts written before the 18th century by these conquerors.

Second, the archaic Spanish in which these reports were written is difficult to understand: "Spanish of early conquest times was extremely variable and relied heavily on local colloquialisms. Spanish documents of this sort are particularly difficult to translate into modern language" (Nunley 1971a:228).

Ruecking uses three primary sources for his ethnographic data: the "journal" of Cabeza de Vaca, written after his return to Spain in 1542; the Relacion Historica of Fray Vicante Santa Maria "(which) contains most of the ethnographic data concerning the bands of Tamaulipas", written about 1756; and the Relacion y Discursos of Alonza De Leon which "is comparable in importance to the Relacion Historica and contains ethnographic data concerning the bands of Nuevo Leon," written in 1649.

Besides the problem of translation, De Vaca's journal affords other difficulties. Newcomb mentions that the reason anthropologists have never made use of De Vaca's

journal is doubtfulness as to where he was and the people he was among. However, he (1961:459-474) considers Krieger to have correctly reconstructed the route of the journey. Nunley (1971b) has cast doubts on Krieger's reconstruction of De Vaca's route, in the portion Krieger places in Southwest Texas and Northern Mexico, with arguments that leave the route still very much open to question. Nunley also gives De Vaca credit for correctly identifying cornmeal-harina de maiz (sic) - as opposed to ground mesquite beans, which he elsewhere describes (Newcomb postulates he must have confused the two). If cornmeal was present at this point, then Krieger's route would indicate the presence of agriculture near present-day Roma, Texas, a trait for which we as yet have no archeological evidence.

Still another question which arises concerns De Vaca himself. Of wealthy and noble lineage, the "young Spanish gentleman was cast into an environment as completely different from that to which he was accustomed as night is from day" (Hill and Holdsworth 1973) - forced to serve rather than be served, to extract his sustenance from the land rather than being given it. Could he give as objective and factual a report as a trained ethnologist? And could such recollections persist unadulterated for the seven years (by De Vaca's reckoning) between the time he left the people Krieger believes were the Coahuiltecans and the writing of his recollections in Spain in 1542? It seems unreliable, yet Ruecking, and to a greater degree, Newcomb, accept his reminisces as viable ethnohistoric data.

One hundred years later, in 1649, Alonzo De Leon wrote his Relacion y Discursos. In the meantime, rising Indian opposition to the northernmost Spanish settlements at Monterrey, Saltillo, Cerralvo, and Monclova was noted (Ruecking 1955:63). The first northern expedition of the seventeenth century, in 1638, exploring from Mier to the coast, had to fight most of the way there and back.

One reference to De Leon (Bishop 1933:121) hints at the reason for the concerted hostility toward the Spaniards by these bands of Indians. Slavery at this time in Mexico was illegal, but the "encomienda" system put each settler in charge of the "spiritual welfare" of as many as hundreds of Indians, while officials (like De Leon) could legally impress any number of Indians as burden-bearers (Bishop 1933:146). (One wonders whether the town of Cerralvo, established in 1588 about fifty miles south of the Rio Grande, and haciendas around it were built and worked by Coahuiltecans "for their spiritual welfare.")

By the time of Fray Vicante Santa Maria, the following contacts had occured between the Spanish and the Indians (Nunley 1971b:307):

1. 1655 - more than 100 Spaniards, along with 300 or so Indians, pursued a group of Indians across the Rio Grande where 100 of the fugitives were killed and 70 taken prisoner.

2. 1670 - extensive missionary activity began in the area. Missions were established between 1675 and 1677. Smallpox was known to have decimated many Indian populations.

3. 1689 - Alonzo de Leon led a force across Southwest Texas to counter the movements of the French in the vicinity of Matagorda Bay.

4. 1700 - Mission San Francisco Solano established on the Rio Grande - moved to San Antonio in 1718.

5. 1722 - a presidio, La Bahia, and a mission, Espiritu Santu were established near the coast. The mission was moved in 1726 and again in 1729.

Such repeated encounters with a stronger culture would almost certainly have altered the culture patterns of these peoples to some extent, even if the dreaded smallpox had not considerably weakened them.

Yet Fray Santa Maria's 1756 Relacion Historica is relied upon for information about the bands of Tamaulipas, and this undoubtedly somewhat distorted picture is generalized to all the groups of Coahuiltecan speakers, and assumed to describe the pre-contact culture of the entire area.

Unless more historical material comes to light in libraries of Mexico or Spain, we cannot cross-check the sources of ethnohistoric data either to verify or discredit them. However, until then, archeological investigation will be the only source of information concerning Coahuiltecan culture.

The Brownsville Complex of the Lower Rio Grande Valley

The "Brownsville focus" was defined near the mouth of the Rio Grande" consisting of small late campsites along hills and arroyos which show eroded hearths with a good quantity of broken shell" (Hill 1973). The definition of this focus was based on Anderson's surface-collected materials (Anderson 1953; MacNeish 1958). Anderson identified 400 sites in Cameron and Hidalgo counties before modern population growth and intensive cultivation, and later excavations have borne out the feasibility of the focus.

Potsherds include Rockport from up the coast and Huastec from farther south along the coast.

"Starr and Fresno arrow points are found, and sometimes Matamoros and Catan dart points. Scrapers, drills, and knives of flaked stone, and ground objects of sandstone and pumice are found, along with tubular bone beads and other bone tools and ornaments. Objects made from marine and freshwater shells are numerous. Arrow points of glass are not rare, indicating an extremely recent, historic 'ending' for the several hundred year old focus" (Hill 1973:8).

The Brownsville complex includes the use of elevated areas as cemeteries - a trait which they share with other coastal groups in Kleberg, Nueces, and San Patricio counties (Hester 1969:158). Brownsville complex cemeteries seem to have more associated artifacts, especially of shell. One of the best-documented cemetery sites is the Ayala site, on an old channel of the river. As many as forty-four burials were charted, but only six were fully recorded. Burial goods included:

a. red ochre
b. Oliva sayana tinklers
c. Oliva sayana beads
d. disc-shaped conch-shelled beads
e. tubular bone beads, some decorated with encircling grooves
f. deer antler beam fragment
g. large trianguloid conch shell pendant

h. perforated carnivorous canines
i. incised rectangular bone pendants
j. undecorated rectangular bone pendants
(Hester and Ruecking 1969:156)

At another well-documented site, the Floyd Morris site, interesting artifacts associated with the eleven burials investigated included a tubular jadeite bead of possible Huastecan extraction, human, animal and bird bone beads, and one Tortugas and one Matamoros point. The almost complete lack of midden debris at both sites indicates that the habitational area was probably somewhere away from the cemetery (Collins, Hester, and Weir 1969:144).

The Falcon and Mier Foci

Upriver from the Brownsville complex, we find an area of extensive archeological survey in Zapata and Starr counties, salvage operations performed ahead of Falcon Dam during the early 50's. For these foci I am relying almost entirely upon a discussion published by Hill (1975).

"A densely occupied river section is described, showing short-term foraging camps...The Falcon Focus contains artifacts and debris of a lifestyle found over a very large area of mid-Eastern Mexico and South Texas. The Tortugas, Abasolo, and Refugio dart point styles are always found...flaked tools are abundant but grinding tools are said to be rare. Human burials were accompanied by tubular bone beads."

"The Mier Focus contains much of the above earlier evidence, but a pair of new dart points now appear, the triangular Matamoros and the round-based Catan..."

The La Perdida site in Starr County, on Arroyo Los Olmos, was reported by Frank Weir. It yielded assemblage containing Archaic points - Tortugas, Abasolo, Matamoros, Catan, Refugio, Pandora, Desmuke, Langtry, Kent, Shumla, Lange, and Castroville and also fist axes, drills, knives, scrapers, gravers, gouges and thousands of snail shells (a feature of sites in the Falcon and Mier foci described above).

Some tantalizing Paleo evidence has been found in this area: "elephant bones overlying a flint flake or two...Clovis, Plainview, Golondrina, Meserve, Lerma, Angostura and Scottsbluff...none in absolutely positive Paleo settings...a Clovis point not made of local stone...a very few fluted Folsom points...most from Webb County" (Ibid.).

The Brush Country

The climate in this area of the Rio Grande Plain is dry - 28 inches of rainfall annually, but the area is well watered, especially Zavala and Dimmit Counties, by numerous streams. In western Zavala County the Turkey, Chaparrosa, Palo Blanco, Picosa, Comanche, and Pendeneia Creeks converge before emptying into the Nueces - and the Pendencia and Comanche head within five to ten miles of the Rio Grande affording interesting possibilities for travel and cultural mixing. The Nueces River bisects Zavala County and crosses the northeast corner of Dimmit

before meandering to the coast - another possible pathway for culture mixing. East of the Nueces are Tortugas Creek and the Leona River. The Carrizo sands - water-rich sandstone in the Wilcox group - surfaces in southern Dimmit county, and furnished sweet, clear springs until twentieth-century irrigated agriculture depleted them.

The thorny brush wasn't profuse until the nineteenth century - prehistoric burn-offs prohibited its spread (Hill 1973). Along the waterways, however, heavy stands of pecan, live oak, mesquite, mulberry, persimmon, elm and ash, occurred, with mustang grape, dewberry, arrowhead, water lily, cattail, and many more (Hill and Holdsworth 1973:10).

These thick, rich stream bottoms would have furnished food for many living creatures: whitetail deer, rabbits (jack and cottontail), opossums, raccoons, squirrels (tree and ground), armadillo, rats, mice, marmot, gray fox, coyote, mountain lions, bobcats, jaguar, birds (from the wild turkey down to the wren), lizards, snakes, fish, crayfish, mussels, snails, and alligators (Hill 1973); Hill and Holdsworth 1973:9; Hester 1973:26).

The prickly pear flats would have supported more animal life - rabbits and pack-rats, mice, snakes, cactus wrens, gophers, foxes, and coyotes. The population of the prickly pear flats would have swelled during the midsummer "pear apple" season - contemporary observers report fierce competition among birds, wild game, and range animals for the sweet fruit (Hill and Holdsworth 1973:5).

The major portion of this land was a broad, grassy plain. It abounded in antelope and prairie dogs, and occasionally, probably in the winter, bison would come down out of Central Texas.

Archeology

Newcomb mentions that "the prehistoric past of the south Texas Coahuiltecans is not well known, which is not surprising considering the fact that such crudely-equipped hunters and gatherers as these prehistoric peoples must have been, left behind few items for archeologists to find. And archeologists are notoriously reluctant to explore such sun-scorched, prickly, uninviting, and relatively unproductive regions." (Newcomb 1961:31). (Is that you chuckling, Mr. Hill?)*

T.C. Hill, Jr. of Crystal City, who probably has a better acre-by-acre acquaintance with this area and its archeology than just about anyone since the Coahuiltecans were here, says:

"We find prehistoric Indian camps eroding from the shoulders of all our streams, in almost endless procession... (Hill and Holdsworth 1973:1) we've found a few Clovis points...more numerous Folsoms...Heavy, long-lived occupation (indicated by) Golondrina and Angostura...frequently near the creeks...with Clear Fork gouges, square-based knives, surrounding creekbed erosions which sometimes reveal mammoth remains."

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* Editor's Note: Yes, I do chuckle a lot, and my left eye is developing a noticeable tic. I go around talking aloud to myself some, so maybe Dr. Newcomb was right all along. TCH

"Tortugas and Abasolo dart points are found in profusion, and grinding tools appear in the inventory of those people." South of a line drawn east to west across Dimmit County, "a preference for the stemless, notchless styles, like Tortugas, Abasolo, Refugio, Desmuke, Matamoros, Carrizo, Catan, etc. ...north of the line things like Pandale, Bulverde, Pedernales, Almagre, Langtry, Shumla, Frio, Castroville, Montell, Marcos, and many many Ensors dominate." (Hill 1973).

West of the Nueces, many Langtry and Shumla points occur, and well-shaped grinding tools are fairly common; fewer of these traits occur east of the Nueces.

The Zavala County Archaic is rather confusing. Not only is there a variety of dart point types, but strange styles turn up regularly, too, seeming to be hybrids, or miniatures of surrounding types. The Clear Fork Gouge shows up in great numbers, some with heavy wear signs, others with none at all, in varying sizes and degrees of sophistication of technique. Knife-like tools, all sizes, Guadalupe gouges, side, end, side and end, semi-lunar gouge-scrapers, cortex flake, secondary flake - all sizes and shapes of scrapers are found here. Grinding tools occur and one outstanding specimen is a one-inch thick slab of sandstone, edge-pecked to an oval shape of 20" by 14", with a 9" cup near one end. Turn it over - there's a 9" cup near the other end. Numerous manos have been found.

"We haven't found woven sandals, nor baskets, nor nets, ropes, leather goods, atlatls, bone or antler tools (nor many Archaic bones even) but we sure suspect them. They're common items in the Lower Pecos Archaic and were certainly here but have not been preserved in our open campsites" (T.C. Hill, personal communication 1973).

Suhm, Krieger and Jelks (1954:142) stated that "native tribes remained without pottery until they were taught these arts by the Spanish friars." We have no conflicting evidence concerning agriculture, but several prehistoric sites with ceramic remains have been found in south Texas and reported by Hester and Hill (1971). These authors are the source for the following quotes:

"In Dimmit County, thirteen sites and localities have been documented. Five of these yielded more than 100 sherds, and two other sites have produced in excess of 400 sherds." All are on the Nueces River, a nearby tributary, or along creeks which drain into the Nueces. Archaic and Late Prehistoric material, Perdiz, Scallorn, Fresno, Cuney, and subtriangular forms occur at the sites. "At one site (41DM68) a glass trade bead was found; this constitutes the only evidence for historic contact at any of the sites. Contact with Gulf Coast peoples is suggested by a marine shell at site 41 DM 31."

"A.T. Jackson (ms.) has stated that Indian potsherds occur at a locality on Rosita Creek in Maverick County, a tributary of the Rio Grande. No other data are available."

"Four pottery-bearing sites and one locality have been recorded, though each has yielded only a small sample of sherds, in Zavala County. Two of the sites are along Tortugas Creek...Three hard, bone-tempered sherds have been collected from a large Archaic locality in the far western part of the county, near the Maverick County boundary."

The pottery resembles the Leon Plain style of the Edwards Plateau - bone tempered, thin, crisp, gray to pink to reddish brown in color. The shape was that of a wide-mouthed, round-bottomed jar with loop handles riveted near the rim (Hester and Hill 1971:197, Fig. 2u).

Disc-shaped beads of coastal shell, a tubular sandstone pipe fragment, one of Edwards Plateau soapstone, cortex-flake drills, sandstone slabs and manos, grooved and incised limestone arrow-shaft straighteners, all appear around and in pottery sites.

The Tortuga Flat and Holdsworth Island pottery sites, on Tortugas Creek, yielded lithic debris, a variety of arrow points including Scallorn and Perdiz, both prepared and exhausted cores and tools, tubular bone beads and baked clay wads, and rich middens with bones of present-day fauna as well as many antelope, an occasional bison, prairie dog, a great variety of rats, mice, snakes and birds, mussel shells and snails. These sites lie very near El Camino Real, but there is no evidence of Spanish contact. Nor has there been such evidence recovered at larger surface-collected sites which lie squarely astride the old road farther south.

In the Upper Brush Country are a few extremely unusual items: "fragments of obsidian and rare artifacts of the material; coastal shells and designed products such as beads, rare sherds showing black smears (asphaltum?) and equally rare sherds of El Paso Brownware; a style of hafted scraper and ceramic spindles, known before only from deep Coahuila; thin, polished ovate double-holed "gorgets"; a black grooved, polished celt; a couple of ground, three-fourths grooved sandstone hammerheads; and on and on and on!" (Hill 1973).

We are just realizing how little we know about the area that has been labeled "Coahuiltecan". A few "complexes" are beginning to emerge from the confusion, but whether they will correspond to Ruecking's (1955) "clusters" remains to be seen. Certainly the apparent degree of individuality of the complexes, as indicated by the material culture, is greater than would be expected from Ruecking's work or from Newcomb.

Yet the degree of cultural mixing, of contact of these peoples with their neighbors, is also greater than has been suspected. Apparently, contact took place with cultures hundreds of miles apart, as evidenced by the obsidian and El Paso Brownware from the west, and coastal shell and artifacts of same.

The wealth of archeological material already collected by just a few dedicated investigators has made but a small dent in the Rio Grande Plain's abundance of archeological evidence. Much more work needs to be done before we can even begin to know the Coahuiltecans, but the wealth of evidence they left behind encourages us to believe many questions can and will be answered.

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