

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT
THE BANQUETE BEND SITE
(41 NU 63) NUEGES COUNTY, TEXAS**

Stephen L. Black

With an Appendix
By Edward R. Mokry, Jr.

**Center for Archaeological Research
The University of Texas at San Antonio
Archaeological Survey Report, No. 63**

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INTRODUCTION

The Banquete Bend site, 41 NU 63, was initially recorded by Hayden Whitsett, archaeologist for the Texas Water Quality Board, on February 2, 1976. Whitsett discovered the site while surveying several small tracts of land on which a sewage treatment plant would be located. He recommended that the site be intensively surface surveyed and collected prior to construction of the plant. Alton Briggs of the State Historic Preservation Office reviewed the recommendations and added a requirement for limited subsurface testing.

During June 1976, the Center for Archaeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio, was contracted by the Nueces County Water Control District #5 to carry out the investigations recommended by Whitsett and Briggs. The proposal called for controlled surface collection, mapping and subsurface testing to evaluate the significance of 41 NU 63. Dr. Thomas R. Hester, Director of the Center, served as principal investigator, and the author served as field supervisor. Field work was conducted during July 1976, and excavations indicated Late Archaic and Late Prehistoric occupations of the site. The Center for Archaeological Research subsequently recommended that the site be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places and that steps be taken to insure preservation of the site (letter, Hester to Whitsett, July 26, 1977). On August 12, 1976, Whitsett again examined the area, and a second location for the sewage treatment plant was found which would not interfere with 41 NU 63 or any other visible archaeological resource.

This report documents the July 1976 field investigations and subsequent laboratory analysis.

SITE SETTING

The Banquete Bend site (41 NU 63) is situated on an abrupt bend of Banquete Creek a few miles upstream from the junction of Banquete Creek and Agua Dulce Creek in western Nueces County, Texas. It lies between the Texas-Mexican Railroad and Highway 44 approximately one mile east of Banquete, Texas. Banquete Creek is a tributary of Petronila Creek, which begins at the junction of Banquete and Agua Dulce Creeks and eventually drains into Baffin Bay.

Approximately eight miles northeast of Banquete Creek is the Nueces River, the most important drainage system for much of southern Texas. Banquete Creek drains the blackland soils of the flat coastal plain. It is a shallow creek carrying little water much of the year, but, during periods of high rainfall, all of the creeks in the area quickly overflow their banks and inundate large lowlying areas. This hydrological system has been altered in recent years by the construction of roads, bridges and loss of natural ground cover. Heavy rains now cause more extensive flooding than probably would have occurred in prehistoric times.

Climate*

The Banquete Bend site lies in the climatic transition zone between the humid subtropical Gulf Coast area and the semiarid south and southwest Texas. Since

*Much of this section relies on information included in the Nueces County Soil Survey, U.S. Department of Agriculture (Franki *et al.* 1965).

the site is only 35 miles northwest of the Gulf of Mexico, humidity in the area is normally quite high. Annual rainfall in Nueces County averages 25-28 inches. Average temperature is very warm throughout the year, ranging from 58°F in January to 83°F in July and August. Nueces County is sunny, receiving over 80% of possible sunlight during the summer months. Evapotranspiration rates are high during winter and summer but are actually less than would be expected from such a sunny location. This is due to high humidity created by prevailing southeasterly winds from the Gulf of Mexico.

There are two climatic factors which play irregular but important roles in the area: severe tropical storms and periodic droughts. A major storm (hurricane) strikes the area on the average of once every 10 years, and smaller storms once every five years. If these storms strike land close to Nueces County, tidal waves, high winds and severe flooding create havoc. In this area periodic droughts are well documented, occurring at irregular intervals and lasting for as long as three to five years. Rainfall during these periods averages 65-80% of normal rainfall. Severe storms and prolonged droughts were probably important factors in the occupation of 41 NU 63 as well as the surrounding area. During the July 1976 visit to the Banquete Bend site by Center staff members, the site was almost completely inundated by massive flooding which occurred as the result of heavy localized rainfall (ranging from 5 to 20 inches). One week later water was still standing in low-lying areas adjacent to the creek.

Soils*

Soils in the immediate vicinity reflect more diversity than the mapping units of the Nueces County Soil Survey maps indicate. Victoria clays encompass much of the site area (Concentrations #2 and #4; see Fig. 1). The clays are a dark gray-black, calcareous, crumbly vertisol formed under grassland conditions--often referred to as blackland soils. This soil type is well known for its high shrink-swell capacity; it cracks when dry and becomes a sticky mess when wet. Prehistoric occupational debris is scattered over this soil surface, a fact at least partially accounted for by the intensive plowing these soils have been subjected to since the early 1900s.

The most heavily occupied area of the site (Concentration #1) lies along Banquete Creek on a slightly raised natural levee. The soil is a dark brown, fine sandy loam which is better drained than surrounding clays. This soil type is not shown on the soil maps but appears to be a small unit of Orelia fine sandy loam. High organic content in this area is perhaps in part due to human occupation.

A third distinct soil type occurs in the low-lying area adjacent to Banquete Creek at the eastern end of Concentration #1 and continuing east and south (Fig. 1). This soil unit is Orelia clay loam; it is a dark, deep, crusty soil known as "hardpan" due to the topsoil which dries into a crust keeping subsoils wet. This area is flooded during moderate to heavy rains and will remain waterlogged for extended periods of time.

*The Nueces County Soil Survey (Franki *et al.* 1965) is the source of information used in this section.

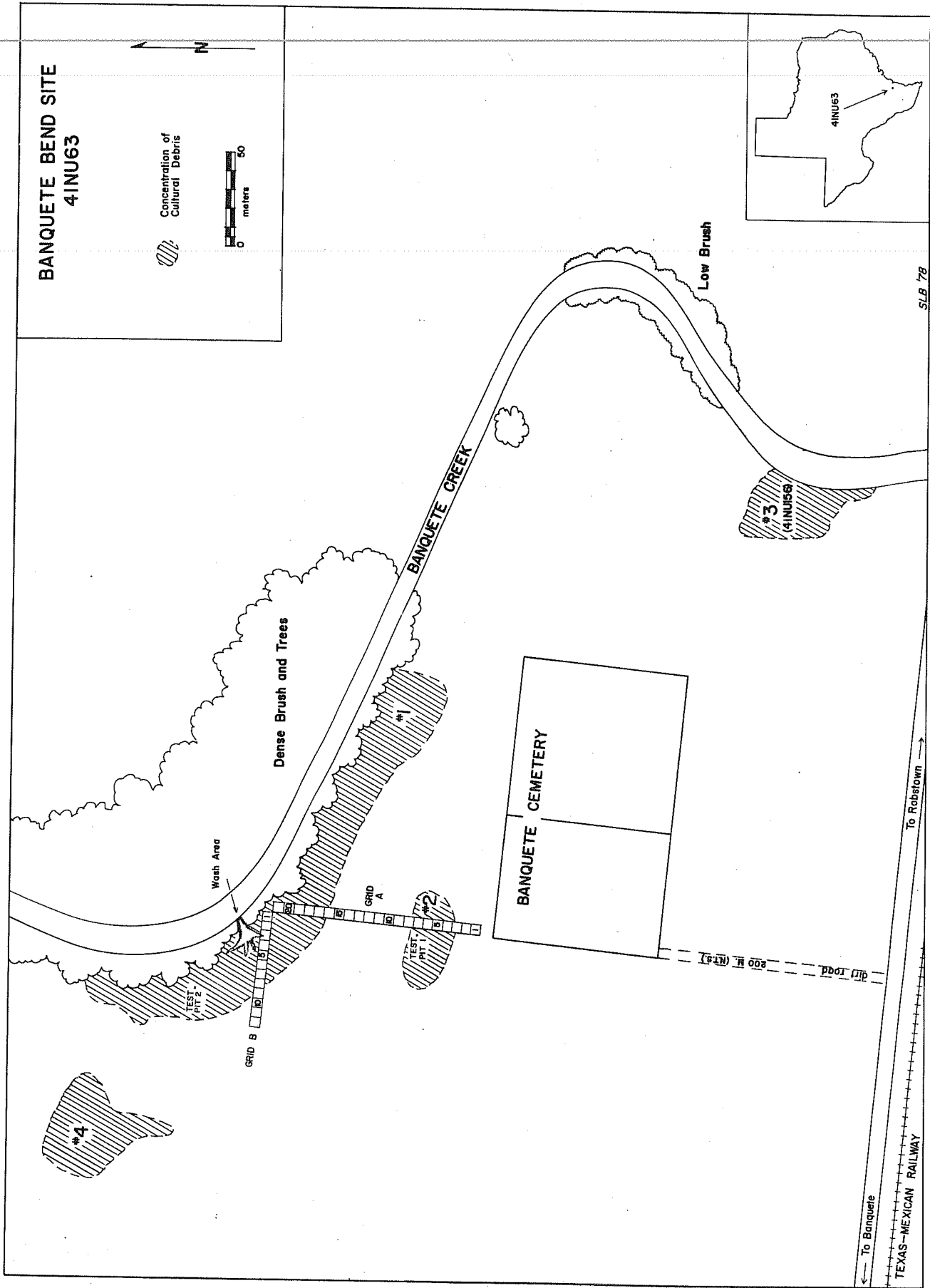


Figure 1. Banquete Bend Site: 41 NU 63. Shown here are major landmarks, areas of concentrated cultural debris and areas investigated during field work.

Biotic Resources

Nueces County is included within the Tamaulipan Biotic Province as defined by Blair (1950). Due to extensive agricultural utilization of the area, very little natural vegetation remains on the site except for a narrow band of trees and brush along Banquete Creek. This riparian zone contains a variety of plant and animal resources useful to man. Anaqua, sugar hackberry, slippery elm, live oak, mesquite and ash combine with scrub brush and vines to form a very dense thicket which conceals the Banquete Creek channel. The zone also provides suitable habitat for a number of fauna including squirrels, rabbits, deer, raccoon, opossum, and various birds, lizards, snakes and rodents.

Banquete Creek presently contains little water during much of the year. Local residents say that springs flowed upstream as recently as 25 years ago, a fact which would have made the creek a more reliable water source in the past. As Hester (1976:3) points out, surface water in southern Texas was much more abundant during prehistoric times. During times of permanent water Banquete Creek would have provided habitat for aquatic species such as fish, turtle and freshwater mussel. A more reliable prehistoric water supply is indicated by the faunal assemblage recovered during field investigations at 41 NU 63.

Adjacent to the creek, in the surrounding coastal plain, cultivated crops have replaced what was once a mixed grassland and brush country (Johnston 1963). Bison, antelope and bear represent fauna now extinct in the area (cf. Hester 1976). The thorn brush (mesquite) invasion which has affected much of the Rio Grande Plain (cf. Bogusch 1952) has been held in check in the Banquete area by intensive agriculture.

In summary, the Banquete Bend site is situated on a small natural levee of Banquete Creek. It is a well-watered location adjacent to a variety of microhabitats suitable for subsistence exploitation. Major riverine and maritime environs located within a one- to two-day walk include the Nueces River, Baffin and Corpus Christi Bays, Padre Island and the Gulf of Mexico. The generally mild climate would have allowed occupation of the site at any time of the year barring only periods of extreme drought or excessive rainfall.

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric Occupation

The prehistory of the Coastal Bend area of Texas (including Nueces County) is still poorly understood (cf. Corbin 1974, 1976), due to the limited nature of previous archaeological investigations in the area and the paucity of deeply stratified sites. Much of the cultural chronology is either unknown or extrapolated from stratified sites in adjacent regions. Earliest human occupations are presumed to date from Paleo-Indian times (ca. 10,000 to 8,000 B.P.) but are known only from scattered surface finds of distinctive fluted and lanceolate points.

Hunting and gathering cultures of the Archaic period occupied the area from 8,000 to 700 B.P. As Corbin (1976) has noted, the Archaic period in the area can presently be reliably dated from approximately 4,000 to 700 B.P. The

Aransas Phase is the only defined Archaic complex in the area (Campbell 1947); and as Corbin (1974) points out, this cultural unit may not be a valid construct.

The Archaic was followed by the Late Prehistoric period (700-800 B.P.-historic contact). Locally this period is represented by the Rockport Phase (Campbell 1958), a cultural unit distinguished by distinctive asphalt-coated ceramics and arrow points. The Rockport Phase has been linked with the Historic Karankawa and related coastal tribes (Campbell 1958). The Late Prehistoric period is followed by the short-lived Historic period lasting from contact with Europeans (ca. A.D. 1528) to A.D. 1850, by which time all the original inhabitants of the Texas Gulf Coast were gone (Newcomb 1961). Summaries of Texas coastal archaeology have been published by Campbell (1958), Story (1968), Briggs (1971), Scurlock, Lynn and Ray (1974), Corbin (1974) and Hester (1976).

Previous Investigations

Little published work has been done in and around the Banquete Creek area of Nueces County. Martin (1930a) mentions that "knives" similar to specimens he found on Oso Creek have been found on Banquete Creek. Although no previously recorded sites occur along Banquete Creek, local collectors have picked up dart points from sites several miles upstream from the Banquete Bend site.

The majority of published archaeological investigations in Nueces County concern one of two areas, Oso Creek and the coast, especially Corpus Christi and Nueces Bay. Martin (1930a), Hester and Stanton (1968) and Patterson and Ford (1974) report on artifacts and sites in the vicinity of Oso Creek. The Corpus Christi area has been the location of the most numerous archaeological investigations: Martin (1929, 1930b, n.d.), Corbin (1963), Calhoun (1964), Campbell (1964), Scurlock, Lynn and Ray (1974), Fitzpatrick, Fitzpatrick and Campbell (1964), Dibble (1972), Hester (1975a) and Highley, Gerstle and Hester (1977). The Coastal Bend Archeological Society has been responsible for recording many of the more than 170 known archaeological sites in Nueces County. Unfortunately, the lack of excavated sites in Nueces County continues to limit our understanding of the local prehistoric record.

FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Surface Observations

The Center for Archaeological Research field crew arrived at Banquete Bend several days after heavy rains had inundated much of the site in July 1976. The rains left the freshly exposed cultural debris easily visible. Surface materials were dominated by large quantities of baked clay lumps which have been variously referred to as balls, objects or nodules (Hester 1971a). Also observed in substantial quantities were land snail shells, burned and unburned bone fragments, chert flakes and chert tools. Less numerous were potsherds, projectile points and marine shells.

Initial surface reconnaissance revealed the existence of at least three distinct concentrations of cultural material (see Fig. 1). The most dense of the

concentrations (Concentration #1) occurred along the bend of Banquete Creek on a small bluff or natural levee which was from one to two meters higher than adjacent creek banks (Fig. 2,b). Smaller concentrations were observed in plowed fields between the creek and a local Historic Anglo-European cemetery (Concentration #2) and southeast of the cemetery (Concentration #3). A fourth (Concentration #4) was later observed northwest of the bend. Hayden Whitsett, on a return visit to the area August 12, 1976, recorded Concentration #3 as a separate site (41 NU 156).

It should be noted that a number of modifications had occurred which would tend to expose, scatter or obscure surface indications at 41 NU 63. The site is situated in a plowed field. The present owner, W. E. Scarborough, and his family have cultivated the field since the early 1900s, always plowing in an east-west direction. When the field was first cleared, it was chained and the brush piles were stacked and burned. This process would leave charcoal and, perhaps, baked clay lumps derived from the clay adhering to tree and brush roots. A cemetery established in the 1860s occupies a natural rise south and west of Banquete Creek. The construction of State Highway 44 north of the site and of the Texas-Mexican railroad just south of the site has left tar pellets and chert gravel which have mixed with cultural material and may have masked northern and southern limits of the site. The highway and railroad have also increased flooding along Banquete Creek. Runoff from Banquete Creek and the plowed fields has also added to site disturbance.

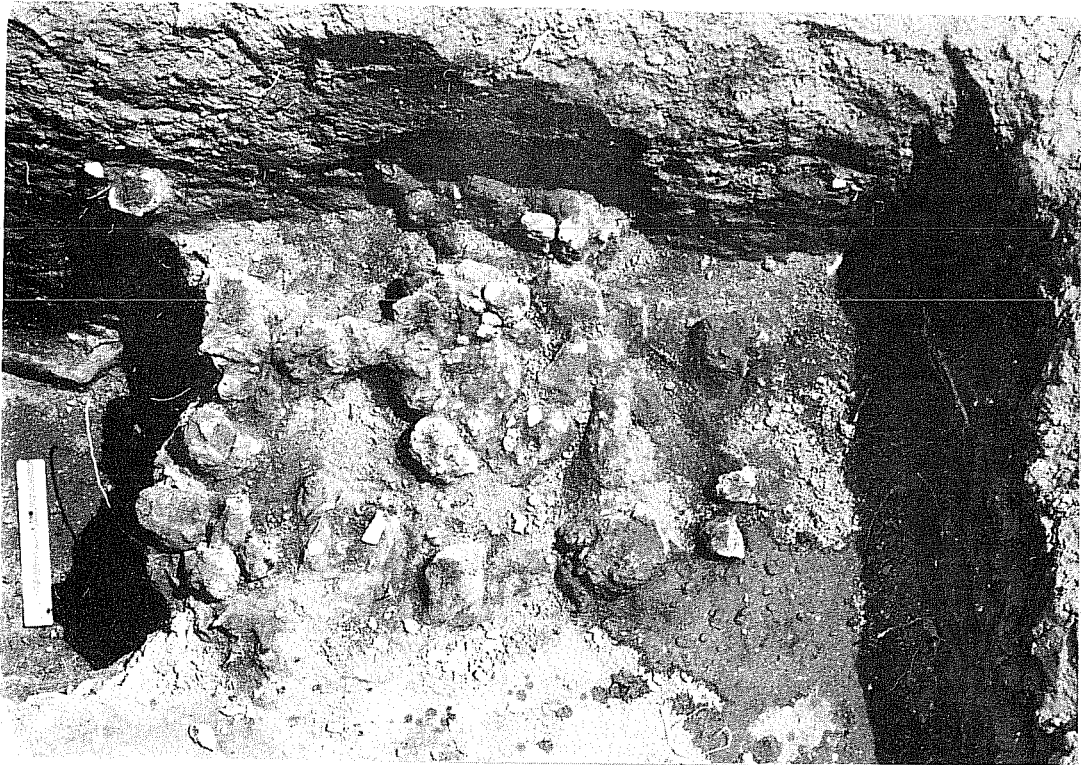
Field Methods

The field crew began work at the site by an extensive surface examination of the site and surrounding area. Site boundaries were flagged, as were distinct concentrations and diagnostic artifacts. Once the site parameters were defined, a measured sketch map (Fig. 1) was made using a Brunton Compass and a 30-m tape. To facilitate controlled surface collection a 5-m² grid running north across the site from the corner of the cemetery was staked out. Grid A contained 21 5-m² collection units numbered consecutively south to north. All visible cultural material was collected and bagged from each 5-m². Due to the enormous quantity of land snail shells, many of recent origin, only a sample was collected. All of the clay lumps were collected, except for very small fragments (less than 2 cm) which were estimated to include less than 10% of the total amount of baked clay.

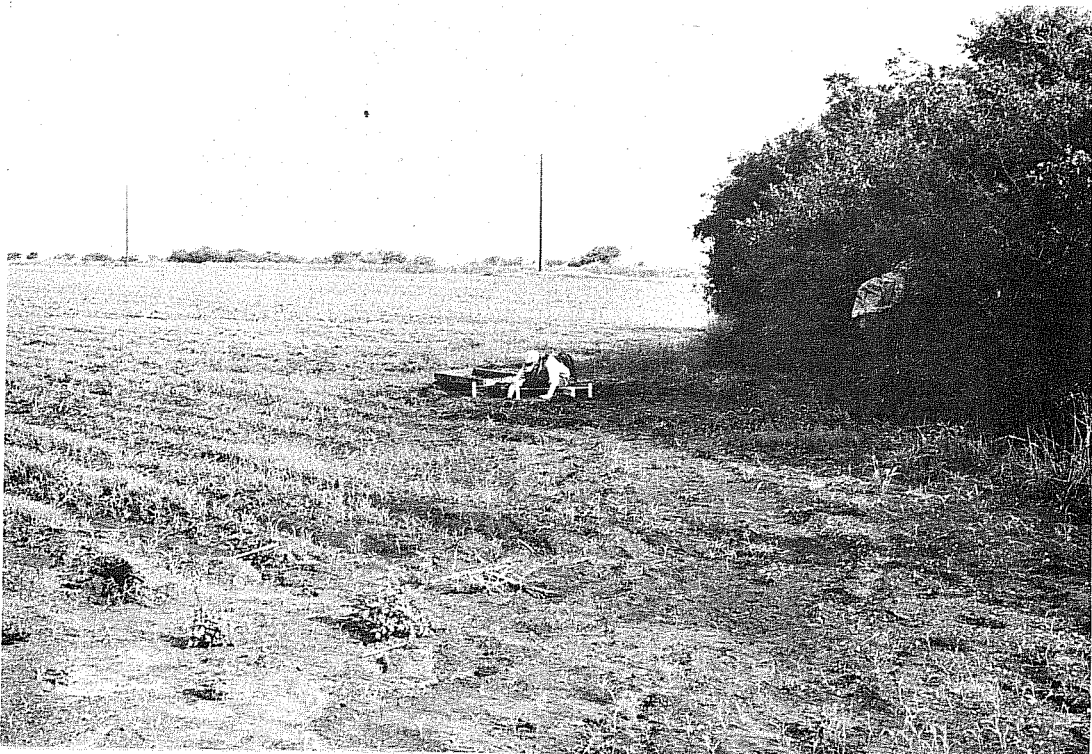
Upon completion of Grid A, a second grid (B) was staked out perpendicular to Grid A extending due west from square A-21. Grid B contained 12 5-m² collection units. As indicated by the map (Fig. 1), Grid A bisected Concentrations #2 and #1. Grid B bisected Concentration #1 through the area labeled "wash" which contained a dense accumulation of eroded cultural debris.

The Banquete Project plan of study called for excavation of two test pits in the area of major occupation, which was originally estimated to be in the immediate vicinity of the historic cemetery, and a third test pit near the creek. As the field crew found the area of major occupational debris to be adjacent to the creek, only one test pit was placed near the cemetery.

Test Pit #1 was placed just west of Grid A-7 in Concentration #2. This was a 1-m² unit excavated in 15-cm arbitrary levels to a depth of 45 cm. The sur-



a



b

Figure 2. 41 NU 63: *Site Views*. a, Feature 1; b, view of Concentration #1, Test Pit #2.

face was uneven due to 10 cm-deep plow furrows. The soil in Test Pit #1 was a dark-gray to black clay with some sand and organic material (plowed-under maize) in upper levels. Dark gray-black clay slowly changed into a lighter whitish gray clay with little sand or organic matter by 45 cm. The very little cultural material recovered from Test Pit #1 was found in the upper 20-25 cm, which appears to be the approximate depth of the plow zone. Level 1 (0-15 cm) contained a few flakes, baked clay lumps and bone fragments. Level 2 (15-30 cm) contained only a few bone and baked clay fragments. Level 3 was completely sterile. The sticky nature of clay soil made screening difficult, and often impossible, but excavated earth was spread out in screen trays and carefully sorted.

Test Pit #2 (1-m²) was placed approximately 60 m north of collection grid square B-10. This locus was within Concentration #1 on the highest portion of the natural levee in a spot which appeared undisturbed in comparison to the wash cutting through the bend. It was located approximately 4 m from the brush line within a tractor turnaround lane (not currently plowed). The same procedures used in Test Pit #1 were used in excavation of Test Pit #2: 15-cm arbitrary levels and 1/4-inch screening. Surface soil was a dark gray-brown sandy loam with a high humus content markedly different from Test Pit #1. The top 5-10 cm layer was compacted by the tractor turnaround lane, but once troweled, the soil was very loose and friable.

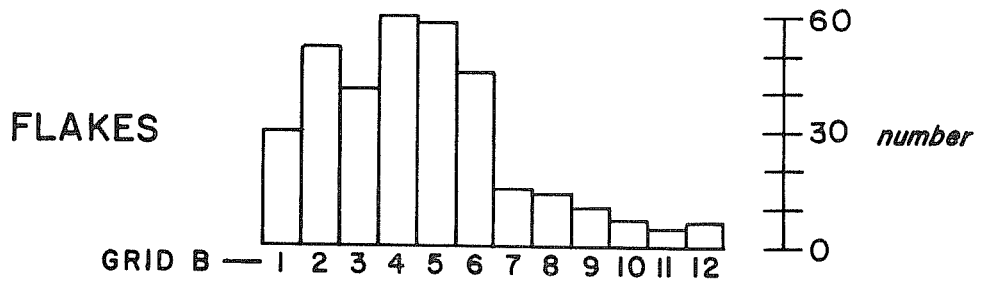
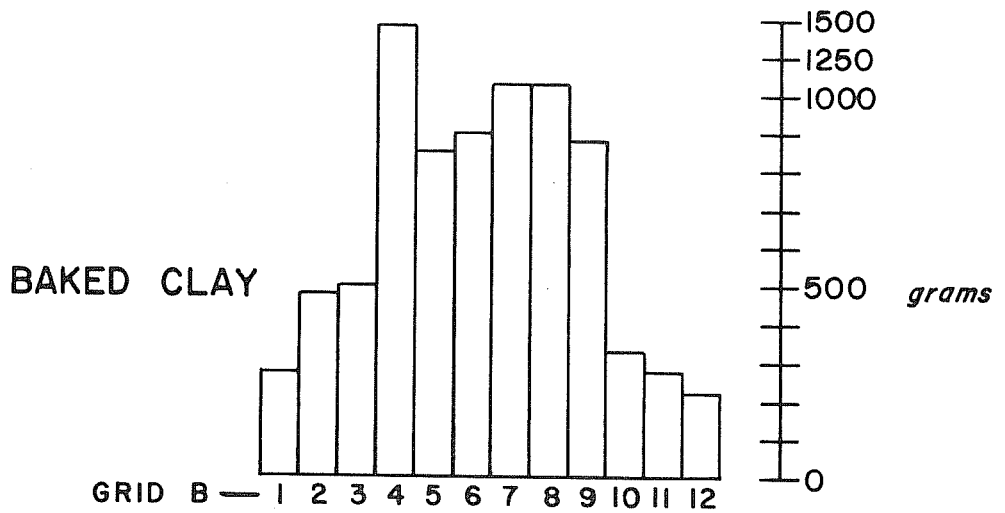
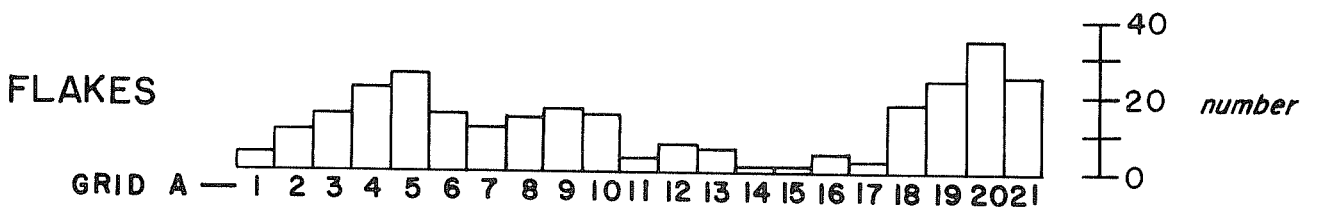
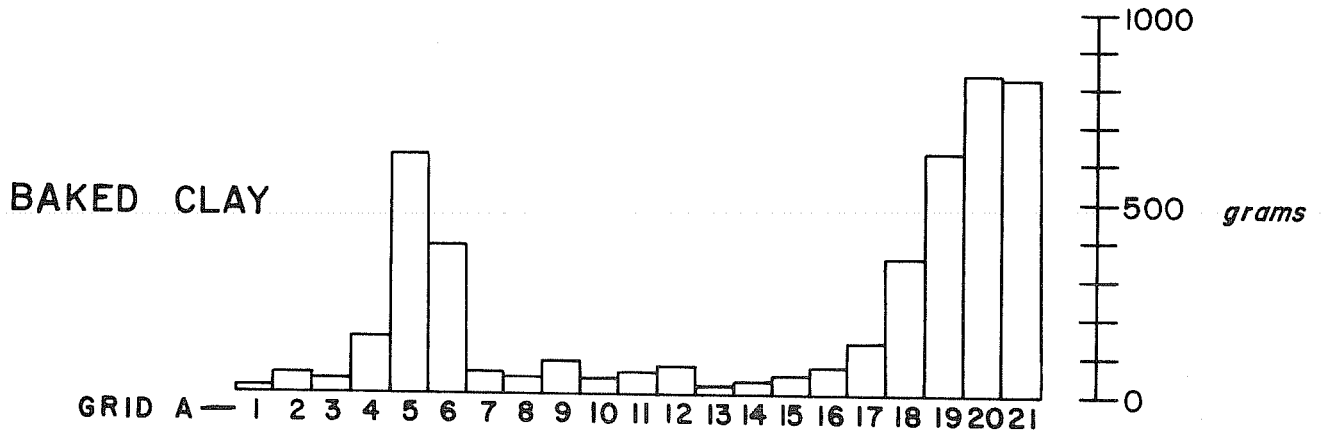
In contrast to Test Pit #1, Test Pit #2 contained large quantities of cultural material. Baked clay lumps and land snail shells were most numerous, followed by bone fragments, mussel shell fragments, chert flakes, historic metal and glass (in upper 20 cm) and a few chert tools. A 0.5 x 1 m extension was added to the eastern side of Test Pit #2 after a burned clay feature (#1) was located at 24 cm in the east wall of Test Pit #2. Levels 15 cm thick were excavated to a depth of 60 cm, where, when pressed for time, a shovel test was continued to 80 cm. Table 1 gives a level-by-level summary of the Test Pit #2 excavation.

The short field session did not permit excavation of a third test pit. This was not really necessary as Test Pit #2 clearly established existence of *in situ* cultural deposits. Test pits were backfilled and the northwest corner stake of both pits was driven even with the ground. Several stakes were left at the corners of the grid lines.

CULTURAL MATERIAL

Distribution

Table 2 gives the quantity of material recovered from controlled surface collection grids. Figure 3 graphically demonstrates the areas of surface concentrations via a plotting of the quantity of baked clay and chert flakes. It is readily apparent that Grid A does in fact cross two distinct concentrations. Similar studies of Grid B indicate one concentration in which quantities of materials abruptly decrease away from the site area. Table 3 gives the quantities and the provenience of artifacts recovered by uncontrolled surface collection.



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Figure 3. *Controlled Surface Collection: Baked Clay and Flakes.* The histograms indicate numbers and weights of recovered baked clay and flake specimens.

TABLE 1. TEST PIT #2 41 NU 63

Level	Soil	Cultural Material	Features
Level I (0-15 cm)	Dark brown sandy loam with heavy humus content Plow Zone	Baked clay (thousands of small lumps), flakes, land and mussel shells, some historic glass and square nails and many burned and unburned bone fragments	None
Level II (15-30 cm)	Similar to Level I	Increasing bone (some micro-fauna), larger baked clay lumps which appear burned, at 17 cm a hand wrought gate hinge spike found, at 20 cm small piece of glass found, no historic material found below 20 cm	Feature #1 baked clay hearth encountered at 24 cm
Level III (30-45 cm) Northern 1/2	No change	Slight decrease, but lots of material of all types present, bone is mostly rodent teeth and jaw fragments, baked clay lumps smaller	None
Level IV (45-60 cm) Northern 1/2	No change	Similar amount as Level III with some larger mammal bone fragments, clay lumps larger and appear burnt black	None
Level V (60-80 cm) Northwest 1/4 shovel test	At 65-70 cm soil lightens, at 80 cm soil is a light brown-grey clay	Slight decrease in material, fewer flakes but larger in size, small bone fragments, increase in mussel shell, land snail and baked clay still present	None

TABLE 2. MATERIAL RECOVERED FROM CONTROLLED SURFACE COLLECTION GRIDS 41 NU 63

5 m ² Area	Baked Clay (Grams)	Flakes	Bone	Shell	Sherds	Other	Concentration Number
GA-1	13.5	4					
GA-2	53.0	11		2		1 lead ball	
GA-3	37.0	15	2				2
GA-4	141.5	22	1				2
GA-5	608.5	24	1			1 scraper, 1 crude biface fragment	2
GA-6	280.5	16	4	1 shell scraper		1 small biface	2
GA-7	63.2	12					2
GA-8	45.5	14		1			2
GA-9	64.5	16				1 crystalline rock	2
GA-10	17.5	14					
GA-11	26.0	3					
GA-12	27.0	7					
GA-13	10.5	6					
GA-14	16.5	1	1				
GA-15	30.0	1					
GA-16	55.5	6	1				
GA-17	134.0	3			1		1
GA-18	367.5	18	1				1
GA-19	637.0	25					1
GA-20	889.0	35	16			1 core, 1 scraper, 1 biface fragment, 1 mano fragment	1
GA-21	880.0	26	15	1		1 shell scraper	1

TABLE 2. (continued)

5 m ² Area	Baked Clay (Grams)	Flakes	Bone	Shell	Sherds	Other	Concentration Number
GB-1	271.5	31	6			1 projectile point (Kent)	1
GB-2	471.0	54	11			3 scrapers, 2 points, unifacial point tip	1
GB-3	498.0	41	6	1		1 crude biface, 1 point base	1
GB-4	1467.2	60	27	1		1 point tip, 1 square headed nail	1
GB-5	101.5	59		2		1 core, 1 biface frag- ment, 1 square nail	1
GB-6	1080.5	45	14			1 square nail	1
GB-7	1085.5	16	25				1
GB-8	886.0	15	7			1 point base fragment	1
GB-9	332.5	9	8			1 core, 1 lead bullet	
GB-10	270.5	7	6			2 square nails	
GB-11	230.7	4					
GB-12	192.0	6	2				
TOTALS	12,079.6	626	154	9	1		

TABLE 3. PROVENIENCE CHART FOR UNCONTROLLED SURFACE COLLECTION 41 NU 63.

Provenience	Projectile Points	Thick Bifaces	Thin Bifaces	Cores	Flakes	Ground Stone	Worked Shell	Marine Shell	Bone Fragments	Sherds
Concentration #1	1		11				1		2	1
Concentration #2	1	1	1		2			5	5	
Wash Area	3	2	4	4	12	1			35	
General Site Area				1			1	1	4	1
TOTALS	5	3	16	5	12	3	2	6	46	2

In Table 4 the quantity of recovered material from each level of Test Pits #1 and #2 is given. Table 4 indicates that Test Pit #2 has the highest concentration of cultural debris in level 2 (15-30 cm). Figures drop off for the lower levels but when the actual area excavated is considered (0.5 x 1 m in level 4 and .25-m² in level 5) the actual amount of cultural material drops very little. Historic Anglo-European material is restricted to the upper two levels with no Historic artifacts found deeper than 20 cm.

Chipped Stone

Relative to other cultural debris, chipped stone tools and debitage are not present in large amounts at 41 NU 63. This observation has been made at many Nueces County sites for a rather obvious reason. Raw material sources in Nueces County are very limited, consisting of small-to-medium stream-rolled cobbles which occur primarily in the Nueces River. Small cobbles and gravels occur in some streams in the county but quantities are limited. The field crew did not observe any gravels or cobbles in Banquete Creek in the vicinity of the site. Chipped stone recovered from 41 NU 63 reflects both the scarcity of raw material and the small size of material utilized. Only one artifact appears to be made from a cobble larger than 10 cm in length. Cores are generally small, exhausted remnants. Trimmed flakes occur in high percentages, often made on very tiny flakes. Well-made, finished tools are rare. In short, the lithic assemblage from the Banquete Bend site appears to be the result of maximum utilization of a limited resource.

A number of chipped stone items recovered from 41 NU 63 have a glossy sheen with red to pink to purple tinges which may be the result of prehistoric heat treatment. Several of the finished tools have a "greasy" feel similar to that described by Hester and Collins (1974) for heat-treated *Shumla* dart points from south Texas. Crabtree (1972:5-6) states that thermal alteration improves the flaking characteristics of many siliceous materials. This improvement undoubtedly would have aided prehistoric knappers in the Nueces County area where raw materials are scarce and often difficult to work due to poor quality and small cobble size. The difficulty in identifying heat-treated chert and the possibility of confusing intentional and unintentional heat treatment is discussed by Gregg and Grybush (1976). Careful examination of the 41 NU 63 lithics combined with experimental replication would be necessary to make definite conclusions regarding heat treatment at the site.

Chipped stone artifacts have been described using generally accepted terminology. All measurements for an individual artifact reflect maximum dimensions; length, width and thickness measurements are given in centimeters. Weight is given in grams. Chert is described by color and estimate of quality. "High quality" indicates translucent fine-grained chert. "Poor quality" indicates coarse-grained chert with impurities or flaws. "Medium quality" describes the cherts between these two extremes.

Unaltered Flakes

This category includes much of the chert collected at 41 NU 63. Edge-damaged flakes were not considered separately due to the likelihood that many of the

TABLE 4. MATERIAL RECOVERED FROM TEST PITS 41 NU 63

Test Pit	Level	Baked Clay (Grams)	Flakes	Bone Fragments	Mussel Shell Fragments	Land Snail	Other	Historic
#1	Surface	72	2			7		
#1	1 (0-15 cm)	233	4	3		38		
#1	2 (15-30 cm)	1,115				19		
#2	Surface	68	3	6		13		4 square cut nails
#2	1 (0-15 cm)	2,164	56	145	9	421	Antler tine tool	nails, glass, wire
#2	2 (15-30 cm)	3,110	42	114	9	712		2 nails, gate hinge spike
#2	3 (30-45 cm)	1,926	17	52	12	393		
#2 N 1/2	4 (45-60 cm)	2,032	9	24	4	249	Grooved bone fragment	
#2 NW 1/4	5 (60-80 cm)	737	3	22	5	90		
#2 East Extension	Surface	*	1			*		
#2 East Extension	1 (0-15 cm)	*	12	26		*		metal buckle, 3 nails, 1 earthenware sherd
#2 East Extension	2 (15-30 cm)	*	17	21	2	*	<i>Olmos</i> biface	
TOTALS		11,457	166	413	41	1,942		

surface collected flakes had been modified by farming activities. A total of 553 flakes was collected from controlled surface collections (flake fragments included). They can be divided into 49 primary (9%), 185 secondary (33%) and 319 interior flakes (58%). A primary flake is here defined as having 75% or more cortex on one face. A total of 152 unaltered flakes was recovered from test excavations: 3 primary (2%), 45 secondary (30%) and 104 interior (68%). All ranges of materials from high to poor quality cherts were found within this group.

Trimmed Flakes (21 specimens)

This category consists predominantly of small flakes with marginal retouch on most available edges. Most are made from poor-to-medium quality cherts; many appear very glassy or vitreous with some discoloration suggesting heat treatment. Marginal retouch is often quite minute, consisting of a series of tiny retouch flakes removed from irregular edges. Well-worn edges suggesting considerable use are common. Working edges are of four types: irregular, straight, concave and convex in descending numerical order. Of the trimmed flakes, 62% are made on secondary cortex flakes. Color of the flakes is largely brown-to-tan with a few grey, two translucent and one white. Of the trimmed flakes 43% come from Test Pit #2, levels 1-3. Size range: length 1.8-4.2 cm; width 1.4-3.6 cm; thickness 0.3-1.3 cm. Weight range: 0.7-19.3 gm.

Unifacial Tools (7 specimens)

These tools are fairly small and irregularly shaped with well-worn edges suggesting heavy use (Fig. 4,c-e). Several have been repeatedly resharpened. One specimen (Fig. 4,e) is carefully made and has a convex bit; the bit angle is steep. The lack of flake scars or step fractures visible under microscopic examination on the ventral surface suggests that the tool served a scraping function as opposed to a cutting function. One uniface is made from quartzite and one from felsite; all others are made from brown-grey, fine-grained cherts, all vitreous and several with pinkish tinges, once again suggesting heat treatment. Four of the unifaces are secondary flakes which appear to be derived from small cobbles. All specimens were surface collected. Size range (complete only): length 3.3-5.1 cm; width 2.7-3.8 cm; thickness 1.1-1.6 cm. Weight range: 11.3-35 gm.

Cores (14 specimens)

These artifacts could best be described as core remnants or exhausted cores. Most are small irregular chunks which have had flakes removed from a variety of directions and surfaces. The majority of the cores are natural platform cores (Fig. 5,b,c,d). One artifact is a bifacial core (Fig. 5,f). The curvature of remaining cortex surfaces on most of the cores suggests an overall small cobble size, fist-sized or smaller. Material varies in quality but is generally poor quality cherts. Size range: length 3.3-7.3 cm; width 2.4-3.9 cm; thickness 1.6-2.7 cm. Weight range: 13-97.6 gm.

One interesting core (Fig. 5,e) is a very small cylindrically shaped artifact with flakes removed from all sides. The core is battered at both ends resembling

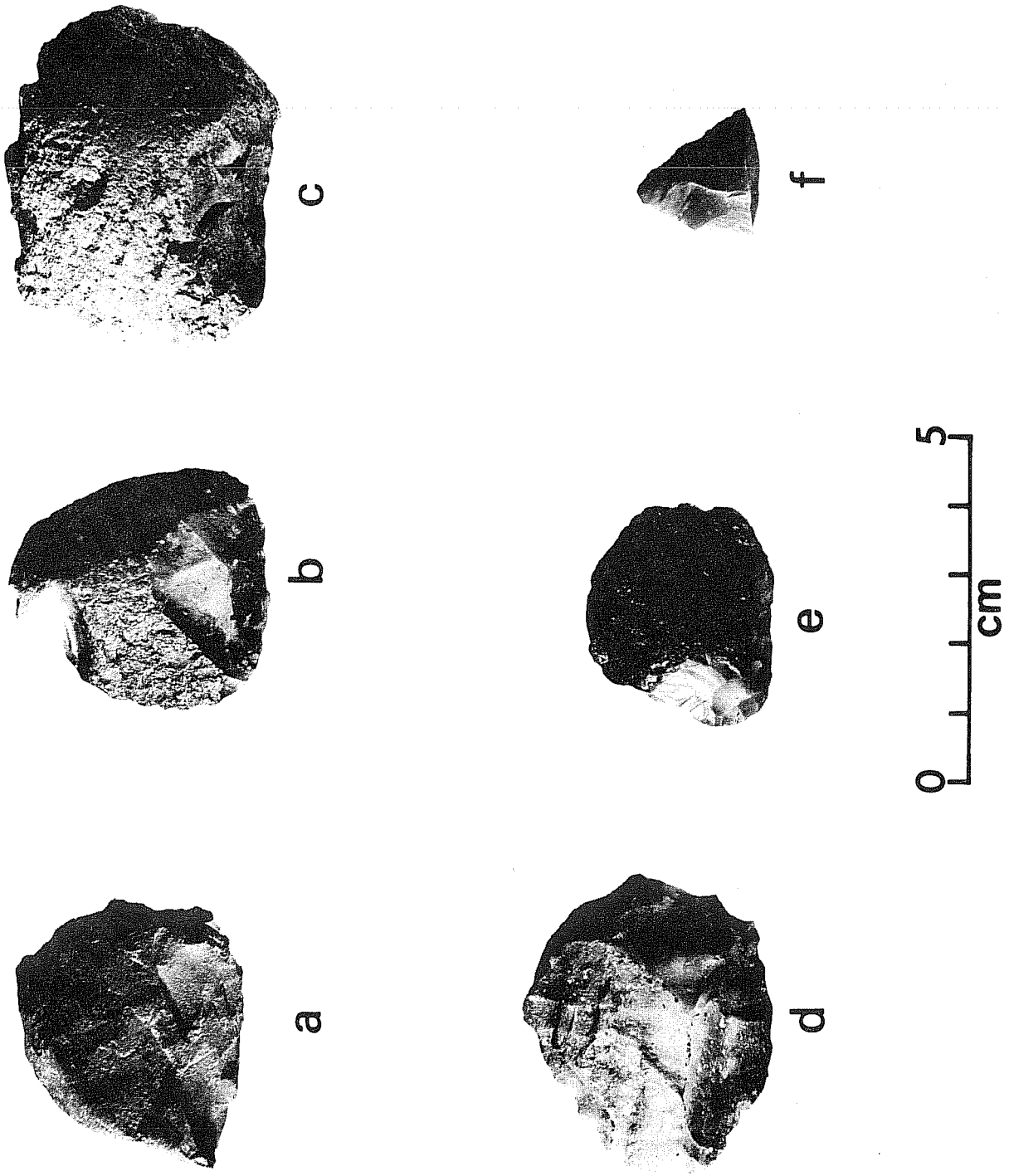


Figure 4. Unifacial and Bifacial Tools. a-b, bifaces; c-e, unifaces; f, distal biface fragment.

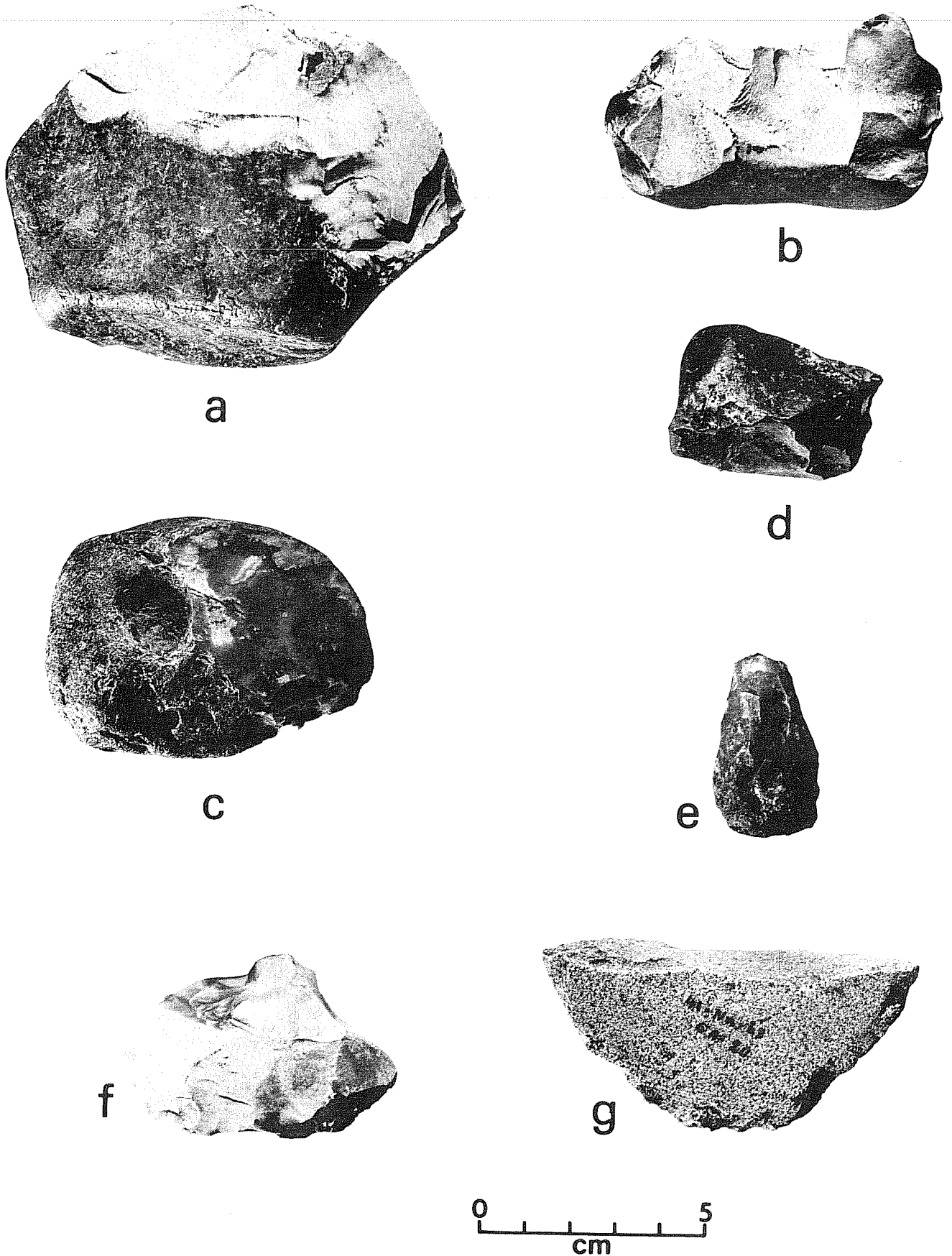


Figure 5. *Cores and Ground Stone.* a-f, cores; g, ground stone fragment.

the so-called "bipolar" cores. Honea (1965) and Shafer (1976) suggest this technique was employed to efficiently remove flakes from small cobbles or pebbles. Sollberger and Patterson (1977), in a recent article, have effectively argued that, rather than an advantageous technique, bipolar flaking "should be described as the lack of skill in flintknapping" (Sollberger and Patterson 1977:40). The authors argue that true bipolar flaking results in a high percentage of broken flakes, lack of controlled thickness, poor bilateral and cross sectional symmetry and irregular and broken lateral edges. Close examination of the cylindrical core from 41 NU 63 reveals that the flake scars do not terminate at anvil contact point; hence, it is not true bipolar flaking. Battering on both ends of the core and the small pebble size of the core suggest that an anvil technique may have been employed. Irregular flake scars indicate that few usable flakes have been removed. Size: 4.1 x 2.4 x 1.5 cm. Weight: 17.3 gm.

Core Tool

This artifact (Fig. 5,a), collected from the surface, is the largest chert cobble found at the site. Flakes have been removed from one edge of the cobble on both faces. Numerous step fractures prevented the knapper from successfully removing additional flakes from this core. The step fractures and battering along the worked edge are so numerous as to suggest this artifact may have been used, after being abandoned as a core, as a hammerstone or hand-held chopping tool. The cortex is dark brown, with interior color gray-brown. Size: 9.8 x 7.6 x 4.8 cm. Weight: 443.3 gm.

Bifaces

A total of 34 bifacial chipped stone artifacts was collected from 41 NU 63, mostly from surface contexts. Most appear to be discarded chunks or fragments. For descriptive purposes these bifaces have been divided into seven categories.

Bifacial Chunks (7 specimens)

These artifacts are irregular pieces with a few flakes removed from each side. These appear to be discarded waste as flaking is random and trimmed edges are absent. A variety of material was used, including palmwood and brown-gray-red medium quality cherts. Size range: length 3.1-4.8 cm; width 2.4-3.4 cm; thickness 1.2-1.8 cm. Weight range: 8.9-35 gm.

Distal Fragments (7 specimens)

Distal fragments (Fig. 6,f,g,h and Fig. 4,f) of thick and thin bifaces constitute this category. Five of these appear to be derived from finished or nearly finished tools. These five have sharpened or carefully trimmed edges and are well shaped. The remaining two bifaces appear to be fragments of unfinished crudely chipped bifaces. Of the five finished tips, four are thick, relative to width (Fig. 6,f,g,h). These may well have functioned as drills or perforators. Material ranges from brown to gray to red medium quality cherts. Several have an extremely glossy, almost greasy, appearance suggestive of heat treatment. Size range: length and width measurements incomplete; thickness of

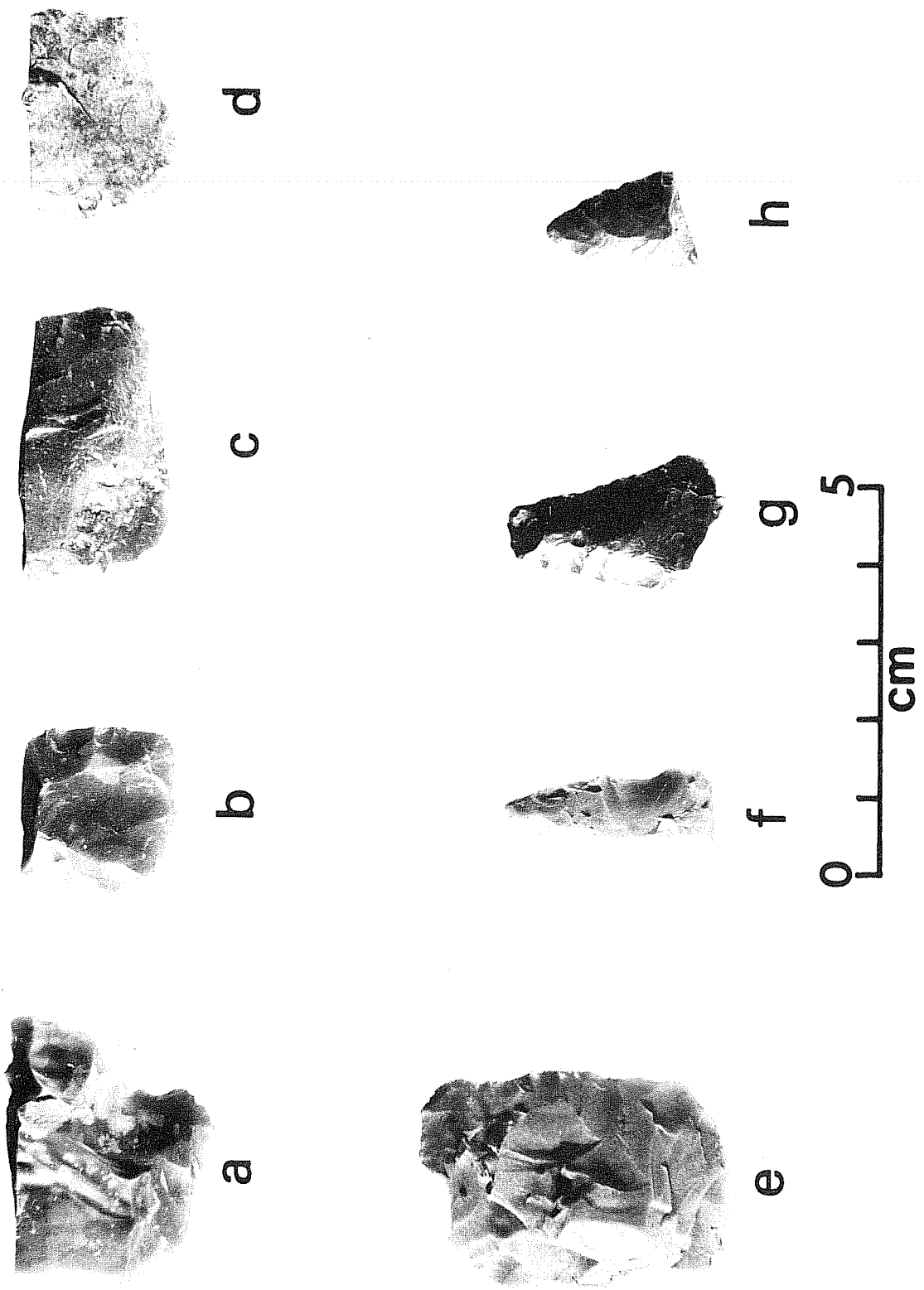


Figure 6. Bifacial Tools. a-d, proximal biface fragments; e, biface; f-h, distal biface fragments.

unfinished bifaces ranges 1.3-2.0 cm; thickness of finished bifaces ranges 0.6-0.9 cm. Weight measurements incomplete.

Proximal Fragments (5 specimens)

All the proximal biface fragments appear to be unfinished preforms snapped during manufacture. All have hinge fractures perpendicular to the central axis. Two are heat fractured and two appear to be heat treated. Three specimens (Fig. 6,b,c,d) are straight-based proximal fragments from triangular or parallel-sided bifaces. One artifact is convex-based and one is straight-based with a slight side notch on one side (Fig. 6,a). Material used was gray-brown medium quality chert with some pink discoloration--again, possible indications of heat treatment. Size range: length incomplete; width and thickness ranges given may not be complete. Width 2.2-3.4 cm, thickness 0.6-0.8 cm. Weight measurements incomplete.

Finished Bifacial Tools (3 specimens)

These three artifacts are rather irregular bifaces with finished working edges which appear to have been used.

(Fig. 4,a) This tool is made on a secondary flake. It has a slightly convex, steeply beveled bit; the edge appears worn. The angle is 70°. Size: length (perpendicular to bit) 3.3 cm; width 3.6 cm; thickness 1.4 cm. Weight: 18.7 gm. This artifact is made from poor quality gray chert.

(Fig. 4,b) This specimen is subtriangular in outline and the working edge is slightly convex. The ventral side has small flake scars across the face with some sharpening flakes removed along one edge. The dorsal surface is covered with cortex except for a triangular flaked area adjacent to the working edge or bit. The bit angle is approximately 53°. Microscopic examination suggests use as a scraper; step fractures or use scars are visible only on the dorsal surface of the edge. Size: 3.7 x 3.5 x 1.6 cm. Weight: 20.8 gm.

(Fig. 6,e) This roughly rectangular biface is irregular in shape and appearance, in part due to numerous step fractures present on both surfaces. Edges of the tool have been unifacially retouched. Edge angles are acute, and step fractures visible on both surfaces along much of the edge indicate that this artifact was possibly used in cutting activities. Edges are well-worn and exhibit resharpening suggesting that the tool has been heavily utilized. Material is light tan-gray with pink tinges and a very glossy appearance, suggestive of heat treatment. Size: 3.8 x 2.8 x 1.0 cm. Weight: 8.9 gm.

Unfinished Projectile Points (6 specimens)

These bifaces morphologically appear to be projectile points which are either unfinished or very poorly made. Step fractures, heat fractures and heat treatment are common, indicating the use of poor quality material that was difficult to work. These artifacts are described in two groups: triangular and lozenge-shaped.

Triangular (3 specimens)

The first specimen described is a small triangular biface with a straight base and slightly rounded corners. A small side notch is present on one side. Heat and hinge fractures apparently caused this artifact to be discarded. Size: length 3.1 cm; width 2.3 cm.*

Fig. 7,b is an unfinished triangular dart point with a slightly convex base; the distal end is broken. Step fractures in the central area of each side prevented final thinning. Despite relatively thick cross section, the edges have been sharpened and the point may have been used as a cutting tool. Size: 4.1 x 2.7 x 1.0 cm. Weight: 9 gm.

Fig. 7,c is a triangular biface with an irregular, broken convex base. This artifact was made on a thin flake with only the marginal part of the edges having been flaked. The base is heat fractured. The edges and the tip are finely worked. Material is a translucent glossy brown chert. Size: 4.1 x 2.7 x 0.7 cm. Weight: 6.5 gm.

Lozenge-Shaped (3 specimens)

The first specimen is a straight-based unfinished point with convex edges. The flake platform remains on the distal end. The material is a poor quality chert with a glossy dark gray surface; one heat-fractured edge exposes a light gray interior. Size: 3.2 x 2.1 x 0.8 cm. Weight: 5.5 gm.

(Fig. 7,g) This artifact has a convex base with slightly convex edges. Longitudinal thinning flakes have been struck from the distal end on both surfaces; these resulted in hinge fractures terminating at one-third and one-half the distance of the artifact. It is possible this is a finished point which was damaged by impact fractures resembling longitudinal flakes. Material is tan medium quality chert with a glossy sheen and pink tinges strongly suggestive of heat treatment. Size: 3.5 x 1.8 x 0.7 cm. Weight: 5.2 gm.

(Fig. 7,e) This artifact has a convex base with slightly convex edges. It is made from extremely poor quality gray cherty material. Severe step fractures prevented final thinning and sharpening of this point. Heat fractures are visible on one surface. Size: 4.3 x 1.5 x 0.8 cm. Weight: 5 gm.

*Incomplete dimensions; artifact not available during analysis.

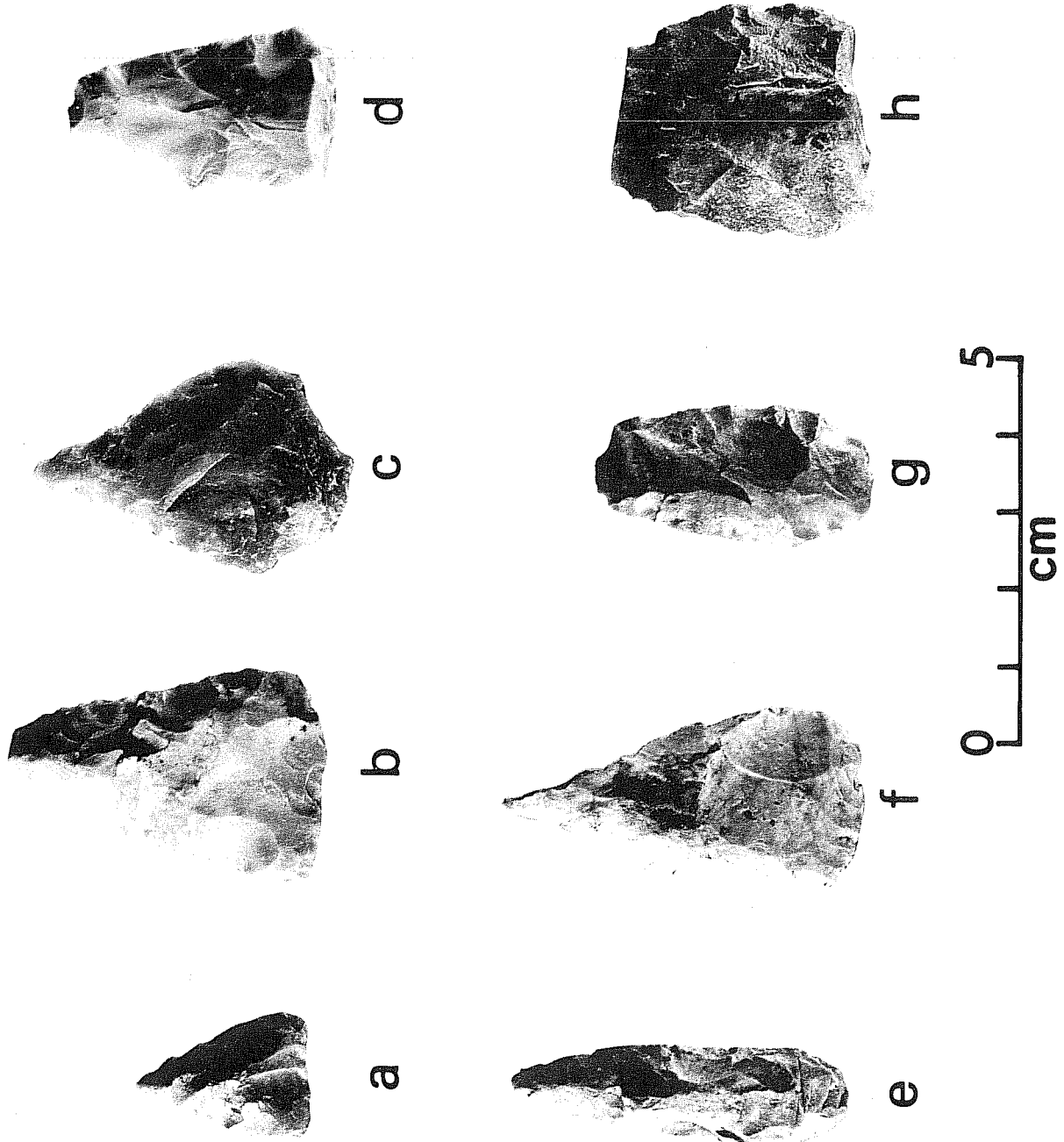


Figure 7. *Bifacial Tools*. a, *Fresno* point; b,c,e and g, unfinished projectile points; d,h, *Olmos* bifaces; f, *Abasolo* point.

Finished Projectile Points (4 specimens)

Dart Points (2 specimens)

(Fig. 7,f) One specimen is a triangular biface with a convex base and alternately beveled edges. It fits within the *Abasolo* point type (Suhm and Jelks 1962). This point is steeply beveled on the left side of both faces giving the point a twisted appearance; thickness increases toward the distal end, giving the base a thinned appearance. This artifact is heavily patinated; recent fracture exposes a brown interior color. Size: 4.5 x 2.5 x 0.8 cm. Weight: 8.2 gm.

The second specimen (not illustrated) has a slightly expanding stem with an asymmetrical outline. It fits within the *Kent* dart point type as defined by Suhm and Jelks (1962). The shoulder on one side is almost right-angled; on the opposite side it is weakly developed. The point is not beveled but has a slightly twisted appearance. Workmanship and material are very poor. Hinge fractures are present on one side. The material is brown chert containing visible impurities. Size: length 5.2 cm; width 2.2 cm.* Stem is 1.4 cm wide and is approximately 1/5 of the total length of the point.

Arrow Points (2 specimens)

(Fig. 7,a) The first small triangular specimen has a straight base and slightly convex edges. It fits within the *Fresno* type (Suhm and Jelks 1962). The base is very slightly beveled and the body is carefully flaked on both sides. Material is medium quality brown chert. Size: 2.2 x 1.6 x 0.55 cm. Weight: 2.2 gm.

The second specimen is a contracting stem arrow point (not illustrated), with a triangular blade. It is of the *Perdiz* type (Suhm and Jelks 1962). The artifact is chipped from very poor quality gray chert (with white inclusions). Size: length 3.1 cm; width 2.5 cm. Stem is 0.9 cm long (approximately 1/3 total length).*

Olmos Bifaces

Two *Olmos* bifaces were recovered from the Banquete Bend site, one from the surface and one *in situ* in association with Feature #1 (baked clay hearth). These specimens represent the northernmost documented occurrence of this very distinct tool type (see Shafer and Hester 1971).

(Fig. 7,d) This specimen is from Test Pit #2. The tool is triangular in outline with straight edges and bit. The proximal end is small and roughly squared but not beveled. This artifact does not fit neatly into Shafer and Hester's resharpening cate-

*Incomplete dimensions; artifact not available during analysis.

gories. It shows distal-proximal trimming on the ventral side and bit beveling to resharpen the tool. The artifact appears to have been discarded during process of distal-proximal trimming, as approximately one-third of the bit had been resharpened. Distal-proximal trimming terminated in the hinge fractures one-fourth to one-third of the length of the tool. Material is medium quality brown chert with pink tinges. A slightly lustrous sheen and pink coloration suggest that the raw material may have been heat-treated. Size: 3.2 x 2.2 x 0.7 cm. Weight: 5.6 gm.

(Fig. 7,h) This somewhat large *Olmos* biface is relatively thick and short. The proximal end is wide and squared. The distal end or bit is steeply beveled. The bit edge is irregular and slightly convex. This tool falls within Shafer and Hester's (1971) Group 1 *Olmos* biface category--resharpening by beveling only. The material is a grainy chert with red and yellow colors; impurities are visible. The bit angle is 61°. Size: 3.4 x 3.1 x 1.0 cm. Weight: 12.7 gm.

Worked Bone

Grooved Bone

(Fig. 8,d) This was a surface find. It is the proximal end of a deer radius. The radius has been circumscribed by a small groove cut into bone by a sharp tool (probably a chert flake). The bone has been snapped on one side along the edge of the groove. The break is approximately 1 cm above the groove on the opposite side of the bone. Several cut marks are visible in the socket of the radius. The groove appears to have functioned as a butchering aid, perhaps to facilitate removal of bone marrow.

Antler Tine Tool

A small antler tine fragment (not illustrated) was found in Test Pit #2 (level 1). The end of the tool is very blunt and appears well-worn. The tool has a dark gray, burned appearance. The function of the tool is unknown; perhaps it was used as a flaking tool.

Worked Shell

Shell Scrapers

Three marine shell fragments (Fig. 8,a,c) were found on the surface and appear to have functioned as scraping tools. All have worn edges which are ground smooth--suggesting use as scraping devices. One tool (Fig. 8,a) is made from a conch shell body whorl section. The other two shell scrapers (Fig. 8,c and one not illustrated) are made from an unidentified marine bivalve. Size: (Fig. 8,a) 7.8 x 2.9 x 0.4 cm. Weight: 16.1 gm. Size: (Fig. 8,c) 3.9 x 2.5 x 0.4 cm. Weight: 6.7 gm.

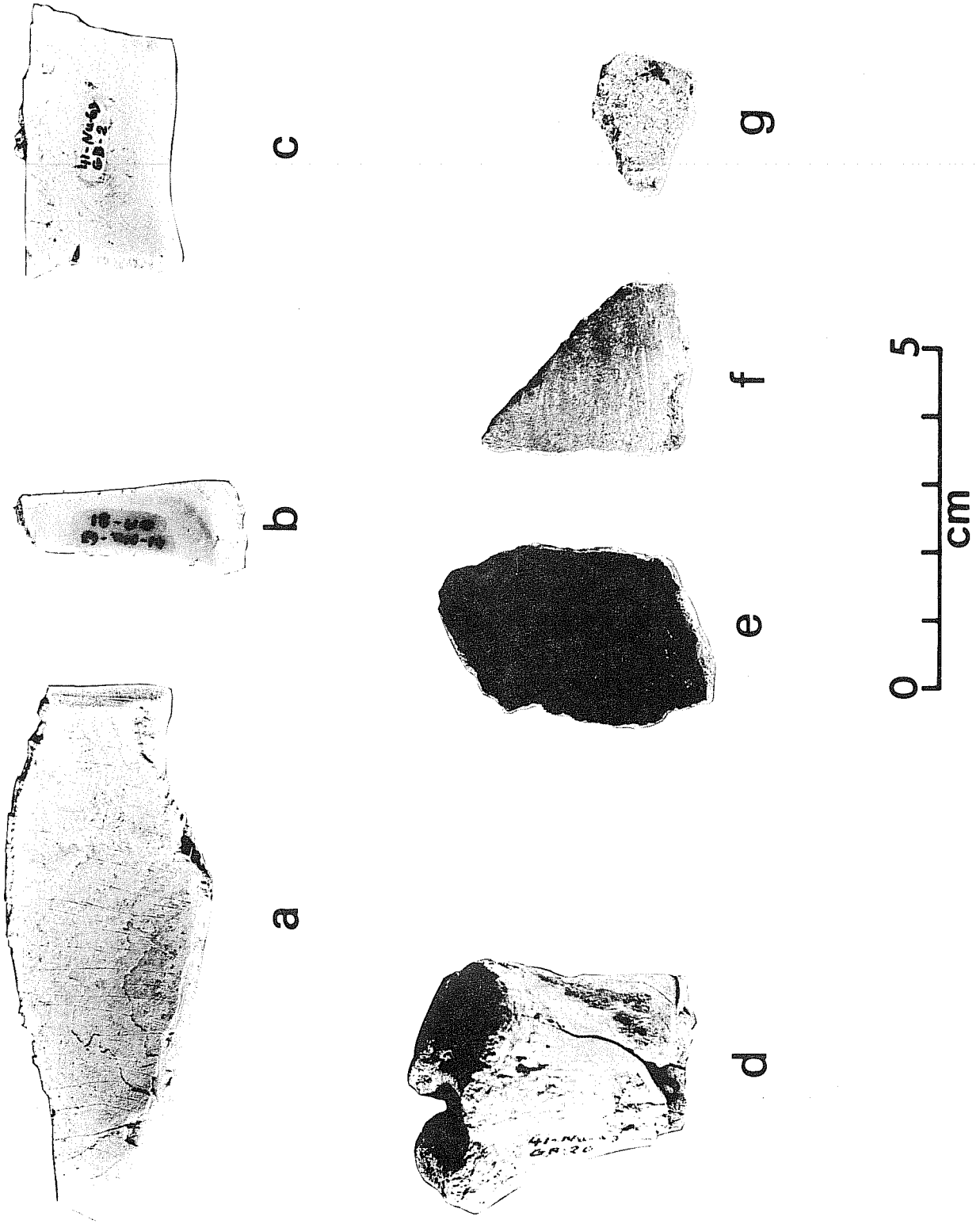


Figure 8. Bone, Shell and Ceramic Artifacts. a,c, shell scrapers; b, shell adze; d, grooved bone; e-g, Rockport Black-on-Gray pottery.

Shell Adze

This small shell tool (Fig. 8,b) has been carefully shaped. It is triangular in outline with a steeply beveled bit (distal end) which is ground smooth. The proximal end is fractured. Lateral edges have been slightly beveled by grinding. The specimen is made from a rib section of a marine bivalve, possibly *Mercenaria*. Campbell (1947, 1952) reported shell adzes from the Johnson site and the Kent-Crane site. The adzes Campbell describes are made from body sections of conch shell. They are considerably larger, ranging 8.0-17.5 cm in length and 5.6-8.1 cm in width; average thickness is approximately .5 cm. The tool from 41 NU 63 is a miniature copy of the conch adzes. It shares Campbell's (1952:48) distinction that "the cutting edge invariably shows strong beveling on the inner or concave face of the shell." In a later article, Campbell (1956:plate 4,i) illustrates a "clam shell" tool with a "beveled base" which appears similar in form to the tool from 41 NU 63. While exact function of the tool can not be stated, edge wear or nibbling on the beveled or concave face of the tool suggests use as an adze-like tool. Size: 3.4 x 1.4 x 0.5 cm. Weight: 3.8 gm.

Ground Stone

One ground stone artifact (Fig. 5,g) was found on the surface of 41 NU 63. This tool is made from a fine grained gray sandstone with a few very small metallic inclusions. The tool is broken in half and is semi-circular in outline. The cross section is plano-convex. The flat side is ground very smooth, and this tool appears to have functioned as a milling stone or mano. Size: (fragment less than one-half original size) 8 x 4.2 x 2 cm.

Grooved Stone

An irregular sandstone nodule (not illustrated) with a distinct groove worn into it was collected from the surface. The nodule measures 5.3 x 4.4 x 2.9 cm, while the groove measures 3.7 x 1 x 0.2 cm (approximate depth).

Ceramics (Prehistoric)

Three small sherds were collected from the surface of 41 NU 63 (Fig. 8,e-g). All appear to be *Rockport Black-on-Gray* (Suhm and Jelks 1962) and fit the description with the following variation.

Temper: fine, sandy with a few minute white filler particles, presumably bone or shell.

Color: surface, buff light brown; core, black.

Surface finish: well smoothed exteriors, poorly smoothed interiors; one sherd has slight interior striations.

Wall thickness: 5-6 mm.

Decoration: one sherd (Fig. 8,e) has the exterior surface completely coated with asphaltum; no designs are visible.

Baked Clay

By far the most frequent form of cultural debris recovered from the Banquete Bend site is baked clay lumps. Hester (1971a, 1971b) provides a description of these objects (balls, lumps or nodules) and discusses the several hypotheses which have been suggested to explain them. Various authors have suggested that these baked clay lumps were: (1) formed by open fires on clay surfaces (Corbin 1963); (2) formed intentionally as substitute hearthstones (Hester 1971b); (3) intentionally made for use as boiling stones (Hester 1971b); or (4) the result of shellfish having been encased, and then cooked, in mud (A. T. Jackson, notes on excavations of the cemetery site, Nueces County).

The baked clay lumps at 41 NU 63 are very irregular in shape and size. They do not appear to have been formed intentionally since they are quite inconsistent and do not have the fingerprint impressions mentioned by Hester (1971b). No shellfish imprints are visible. Corbin's (1963) explanation of the clay lumps appears to best suit similar objects from 41 NU 63. As quoted in Hester (1971b), Corbin's (1963:27) explanation is as follows:

. . . all the evidence points to open fires built on the surface as the major explanation for the fire-hardened clay lumps. Several times I have found these lumps eroded from black ashy areas along with charcoal burned bone and burned shell. Recently, I observed a modern campfire being destroyed by erosion, and clay lumps identical to those collected in archaeological sites were eroding out from the hearth. The lumps were darker in color and harder near the center of the hearth, getting lighter and softer toward the perimeter of the burned area. The color of the lumps seems to be determined by the amount of oxygen that can reach the clay while the fire is burning.

Corbin's hypothesis appears to account for much of the baked clay occurring with cultural deposits at 41 NU 63. However, a second hypothesis could account for the tremendous quantities of baked clay collected from and observed at the site. This idea was suggested to the author by Mr. A. P. Kimble, son-in-law of W. E. Scarborough, owner of the property on which 41 NU 63 is located. When the land was originally cleared for agriculture, brush covered much of the area (Johnston 1963). The usual method of clearing the land involved root plowing or chaining followed by the burning of massive brush piles. These fires could form baked clay lumps in two ways. The trees and brush would have clay adhering to their roots which when burned could have formed irregular baked clay lumps. A second possibility is that a large pile of brush would create quite a long-burning, hot fire. If Corbin's open-fire theory is correct, then a hot brush fire on top of a clay surface would also create baked clay lumps.

The observed distribution of baked clay lumps on and around 41 NU 63 lends weight to the hypothesis that brush fires can create baked clay. Baked clay lumps are present over virtually all of the fields surrounding the site without the accompanying cultural debris such as chipped stone, bone and shell. Table 2 clearly shows the largest quantities of baked clay occur simultaneously with

the largest quantities of other cultural debris. One would expect the bulk of the clay specimens in the immediate site area result from aboriginal activities, as these occur predictably at sites in this region and along the Gulf Coast.

Feature #1: A Baked Clay Hearth

During the excavation of Test Pit #2, a mass of baked clay was encountered at 24 cm. This feature (#1) was exposed (Fig. 2,a) completely by addition of a 0.5 x 1 m extension to the test pit. Feature #1 is interpreted to be a hearth formed of baked clay lumps. Fully exposed, the feature measured 45 cm (east-west) x 30 cm (north-south). Feature #1 consisted of two irregular masses of baked clay with smaller individual baked clay lumps scattered in and around the two larger masses. The feature appears to be the remains of a campfire. Associated with the hearth were burned and unburned bone fragments, land snails, flint flakes, small charcoal flecks and an *Olmos* biface. Soil around the feature is not noticeably darker than the surrounding soil.

The baked clay masses were almost coal black when freshly exposed. As they dried out the exterior became dark brown. Baked clay lumps occurring individually around the perimeters of the feature were lighter in color. The feature appears to be mounded clay which was fired and cemented together. The feature apparently was subject to some erosion as only the consolidated mass remains; charcoal and ashes may have blown or washed away. Feature #1 was covered fairly soon after use as evidenced by the intact nature of baked clay masses. Most of the baked clay masses were removed intact and taken to the Center for Archaeological Research Laboratory for further analysis.

Although the clay masses were removed intact and carefully wrapped in aluminum foil, they had broken into six smaller units upon inspection in the laboratory. These smaller masses measured 10 x 6 x 7 cm, 7.7 x 6.3 x 6 cm, 6.7 x 4.2 x 5.8 cm, 5.8 x 4.8 x 4.3 cm, 6.3 x 3.6 x 4.5 cm and 6.3 x 5.9 x 4.1 cm. These 6-10 cm highly irregular baked clay masses broke into smaller lumps (1-6 cm) when gently washed. Exterior color ranged from black to dark brown, often changing to a lighter brown when rinsed. Interior color was dark brown to black. When dry, the clay lumps ranged from very friable to very hard with the more friable lumps containing more sand. Crushed clay lumps are very dark brown to black. Total baked clay from the hearth weighed 2,000+ gm. Approximately 20 nodules or distinct lumps in the cemented masses were over 4 cm in length. The total number of lumps in all sizes after washing was between 175 and 250. Microscopic examination of crushed clay lumps revealed fine-grained sand and very small shell and bone fragments contained within clay. Light gray root impressions were frequently visible in uncrushed lumps. The hearth is reminiscent of a baked clay feature reported from Grullo Bay by Hester (1969) and lends support to his hypothesis that these lumps sometimes functioned as surrogate hearthstones.

Historic Material

Historic (Anglo-European) material was found on the surface of the site and during subsurface testing. A description of this material dating from the 19th century is given below. Historic material is divided into metal, glass and ceramic categories.

Metal

The most interesting metal artifact was recovered in the eastern extension of Test Pit #2. This object (not illustrated) is a hand-wrought gate hinge spike. It consists of two elements, both of iron: a pin and a spike. The pin is 1.3 cm in diameter and 7.3 cm in length. The spike was made by folding a bi-pointed iron strap around the base of the pin. This formed a two layer spike (18 x 2.2 x 1.1 cm) tapering to a point with a pin protruding at a 90° angle at the proximal end. This artifact would have been used to attach a hinged gate to a wooden post. Similar artifacts date to the 1800s and were often used in ranching (Anne Fox, personal communication).

Lead Bullets

Two lead bullets were collected from the surface of the site. One is a flattened lead slug weighing 5.3 gm. Identification cannot be made due to distortion created by impact. The slug did have rifling marks.

The second lead bullet is a molded lead ball weighing 5.15 gm. It appears to be made in two halves and poorly fitted together, giving the ball a lopsided appearance. If properly joined, the ball would have been 10 mm in diameter. Sam Nesmith, a military historian with the Institute of Texan Cultures, identified the ball as a .40 caliber 'cherry-mold' or single-cavity mold ball. It was made for a Kentucky Rifle or a similar vintage pistol popular between approximately 1810 and 1850. The fact that the mold had slipped is apparently typical of a well-worn cherry-mold and may explain why the ball was never fired.

Nails

Sixteen nails were recovered from 41 NU 63. All were square nails suggesting a 19th century date. These were recovered from Test Pit #2 and from surface collections in Concentration #1. Fifteen nails were machine stamped square cut nails. One nail was a handmade square nail recovered from Test Pit #2, level 2, at the same depth as the hand-wrought gate hinge spike.

Metal Buckle

A small metal buckle from Test Pit #2, level 1, was probably used as an equipment furnishing. It has a steel tongue with a galvanized ring. This buckle is very similar to those used on military hardware in the late 1800s (Anne Fox, personal communication).

Miscellaneous Metal

- (a) cast iron fragment - possibly from cooking vessel similar to a Dutch oven (Test Pit #2, level 1).
- (b) twisted metal strand similar to barbed fencing wire but this short segment contains no barbs (Test Pit #2, level 1).
- (c) small nondescript metal grommet (Test Pit #2, level 2).

Glass

A few scattered small bottle glass fragments of clear, olive green and brown were found. No identifiable fragments were found (Test Pit #2, level 1).

Ceramics (Historic)

White Earthenware

A small fragment with a blue sponge pattern was found. This type is common in Texas throughout the 19th century (Test Pit #2, level 1).

White Ironware

One small nondescript fragment (Test Pit #2, extension, level 1).

Meyer Earthenware

A body sherd with an olive-green glaze made from Leon slip clay (Test Pit #2, extension, level 1). This distinctive ware was produced between 1887 and 1944 by the Meyer family in Atascosa County (Greer and Black 1971).

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATIONS

Field investigations at 41 NU 63 during July 1976 were of a limited scope. Nonetheless, a number of preliminary observations can be made. Several hypotheses are proposed concerning the function, subsistence and chronology of the site.

Chronology

A discussion of site chronology at 41 NU 63 must be preceded by admission of the rather tenuous nature of the data. Diagnostic artifacts recovered from the site include 19th century European materials, *Rockport Black-on-Gray* sherds and arrow points (*Perdiz* and *Fresno*) typical of Late Prehistoric occupations, and *Abasolo* and *Kent* dart points dating from at least the Late Archaic and possibly much earlier. The only diagnostic prehistoric artifact found *in situ* was an *Olmos* biface, poorly dated as noted by Shafer and Hester (1971). The *Olmos* biface has been found in association with Late Prehistoric, Late Archaic and possibly earlier Archaic assemblages.

Historic Anglo-European materials were found to a depth of 20 cm. Aboriginal materials continued to at least a depth of 80 cm. The stratigraphic position of the *Olmos* biface, only 5-7 cm below historic materials, suggests a relatively late date for this tool type. The 55 cm of cultural material which occur below the *Olmos* biface may reflect a rather long time period. Cultural deposits at 41 NU 63 do evidence some stratigraphy and may continue for a depth of 1 m or more. More testing, including horizontal and vertical exposures, is necessary before the chronology and stratigraphy of 41 NU 63 can be well understood.

Preservation

The rich Orelia fine sandy loam adjacent to Banquete Creek is well suited as a preservation medium. Faunal material is particularly well preserved; bone, shell, antler and some charcoal were all found in good condition. Soil formation adjacent to the creek may have been quick enough to aid preservation. Fine sands and silt in soil are undoubtedly the result of stream-laid alluvial fill. The intact nature of Feature #1 suggests that alluviation was at times quite rapid. Rapid runoff created by plowed and cleared fields on the site may have removed some of the overlying soils.

Cultural Associations

Late Prehistoric occupation of the site may be linked only tenuously to historically identifiable cultures of the area. *Rockport Black-on-Gray* ceramics may have been made by some of the Karankawa groups which inhabited the central Texas Gulf Coast (Campbell 1958; Suhm, Krieger and Jelks 1954) as far south as Baffin Bay (Newcomb 1961). Ruecking (1953) has identified several band-clusters of Coahuiltecan-speaking Indians along the Texas coast. One of these, the Orejon cluster for which 15 different band names are known, was centered on the lower Nueces River (see Campbell 1958). As Campbell (1958) has noted, the Karankawa and Coahuiltecan groups share many common traits including linguistic similarities, nomadic seasonal movement and hunting-gathering subsistence pattern. The Late Prehistoric occupation at the Banquete Bend site may be attributed to one or both of these groups.

A number of items were recovered from the Banquete Bend site which suggest cultural ties with adjacent areas. The two *Olmos* bifaces found at the site are the two northernmost specimens yet reported. Shafer and Hester (1971) suggest that the distribution of the *Olmos* biface is primarily restricted to a narrow strip south of Nueces County. Hester (personal communication) has suggested that this very specialized tool form may be attributed to a single group, or perhaps a series of closely related groups. While the two *Olmos* bifaces found at 41 NU 63 may not be the result of a visit to the site by a group or groups which normally occupied an area further to the south, they do suggest some cultural contacts with the south.

A number of species of brackish-water and marine shells were found at 41 NU 63 including *Rangia cuneata*, oyster, conch shell, *Dinocardium* and *Mercenaria*. These shells, along with asphaltum-coated potsherds, indicate definite ties with nearby coastal areas to the east and north.

The relatively small sample recovered from the Banquete Bend site allows only the most generalized speculation concerning the cultural affinity of the site's ancient inhabitants. Materials similar to those reported in the south inland area and the east and northeast coastal areas were found. These may be the result of use of the site by groups from both areas or, perhaps, trade relations.

Subsistence Patterns

Prehistoric subsistence patterns at 41 NU 63 can be only partially discerned due to the small sample size, and knowledge is further limited by the lack of

preserved vegetal material; hence, our discussion must be based on faunal remains. The fauna listed in Table 5 include material from both surface and subsurface contexts. The faunal material was identified by Billy Davidson (Austin). The variety of species reflects the utilization of several microenvironments similar to those present today. The presence of a number of aquatic species such as fish would reflect a more reliable water source, another indication that Banquete Creek once flowed more consistently.

Aquatic, riparian and prairie-woodlands species were represented in the faunal collection. Certain species such as rattlesnakes, cotton rats and jackrabbits could have been found in open grasslands as well as in wooded areas. Aquatic species include fish, frog, slider turtle, water snake and freshwater mussel. The remaining species could have been found in both prairie-woodland and riparian environments.

The heavy reliance on small mammals, rodents, snakes and turtles is comparable to Late Prehistoric patterns noted elsewhere in south Texas (Hester 1975b, 1977). As is the case at many south Texas sites, large quantities of mussel and land snail were recovered. The variety of species represented by this rather small faunal collection suggests a broad spectrum utilization of potential food resources, instead of a dependence on one or two specific resources (e.g., bison, deer). In the absence of any substantive evidence, one can only speculate that many available plant resources, such as nuts, berries, roots, cactus fruits and the like, were also being collected by the site inhabitants. The presence of grinding implements at the site suggests some type of plant processing activities.

BANQUETE BEND SITE (41 NU 63): THE FUTURE

The Banquete Bend site contains stratified and well-preserved cultural deposits which could offer archaeologists an opportunity to fill in many gaps in the local prehistory. Relocation of the sewage treatment plant will preserve this site for the time being; however, erosion and human disturbance will continue the destructive processes. In a recent attempt to halt erosion at the site, the owner has planted coastal Bermuda grass on the field. As previously mentioned, the site is in the process of being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. While this may serve to protect the site from destruction by construction, it will not slow down erosional or agricultural disturbance. It is quite likely that unless additional excavation is conducted at the site within the next 10 years, natural and human mechanisms will destroy the site's potential for increasing our understanding of the local prehistory.

The full potential of 41 NU 63 can be assessed only with intensive vertical testing and horizontal, "open area," excavation at the site. For example, further excavations in the area around Test Pit #2 would likely yield features, time diagnostic artifacts and faunal remains. Additionally, such investigations would clearly define the depth and nature of the cultural deposits at the site. Questions concerning temporal placement of the site, cultural associations, subsistence patterns and intrasite activities could be answered by large-scale area excavations with tight horizontal and vertical controls. A series of additional 1-m² test units or perhaps smaller shovel tests would define the exact spatial extent of the buried deposits. Despite the value of this site, it and others in the area are rapidly being lost. Recent construction, channelization of streams, intensive agriculture and erosion are all taking their toll.

TABLE 5. FAUNAL REMAINS 41 NU 63

Scientific Name	Common Name	Number of Separate Occurrences
Unidentifiable	Turtle	8
Unidentifiable	Snake	4
Unidentifiable	Bird	1
Unidentifiable	Rodent	3
Unidentifiable	Fish	3
<i>Rana</i> sp.	Frog	1
<i>Pseudemys</i> sp.	Slider turtle	1
<i>Terrapene</i> sp.	Box turtle	1
<i>Gopherus</i> sp.	Tortoise	*
<i>Natrix</i> sp.	Water snake	1
<i>Masticophis</i> sp.	Whip snake	*
<i>Heterodon</i> sp.	Hognose snake	1
<i>Coluber</i> sp.	Racer snake	4
<i>Crotalus</i> sp.	Rattlesnake	5
<i>Procyon lotor</i>	Raccoon	1
<i>Citellus</i> sp.	Ground squirrel	1
<i>Sigmodon hispidus</i>	Cotton rat	2
<i>Neotoma</i> sp.	Wood rat	5
<i>Sylvilagus</i> sp.	Cottontail rabbit	9
<i>Lepus californicus</i>	Blacktail jackrabbit	2
<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	White-tailed deer	3
<i>Equus</i> sp.	Horse	*

*Surface context only

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APPENDIX I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NORTHWESTERN NUECES COUNTY

Edward R. Mokry, Jr.

Exploration of the Colony of Nuevo Santander by Jose de Escandon in the 1700s, with eventual recommendation for a settlement at the mouth of the Nueces River, was the first continuing effort by the Spanish to establish themselves in Nueces County (Bolton 1970:57).

In 1749, a colony under the direction of Captain Diego Gonzalez attempted to found the Villa de Vedoya on the left bank of the lower Nueces River near the present site of Corpus Christi. Due to the hostilities of the Indians and the inability to find a suitable site for the settlement, the colony returned to the Rio Grande (*ibid*:58).

In subsequent years, Nuevo Santander became a stock-raising section. Ranching increased and extended northward, reaching the Nueces River. In 1766, Escandon reported to the viceroy that the settlement of the country between the Rio Grande and the Nueces River was making good progress. At this time Blas Maria de la Garza Falcon, the Captain of Camargo, established the first settlement in Nueces County. His rancho of Santa Petronilla was located on the Petronilla Creek in western Nueces County (Nueces County Historical Society 1972:29).

By the turn of the 19th century, ranchers along the Rio Grande began to apply for and to receive grants of land for ranching purposes. During the years 1805 to 1809, five grants were made by Spain on lands situated on the "Coast of Santa Gertrudis in the jurisdiction of the Villa of Camargo, Colony of Nuevo Santander" (*ibid*:30). Four of the five grants (Fig. 9) adjoined each other in the northwestern portion of modern Nueces County. They are as follows: (Deed Records, Nueces County)

<u>Grantee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Ranch</u>	<u>No. of Leagues</u>
Vincente Lopez de Herrera and sons and Gregario Farias	1806	Barranco Blanco	20
Juan de la Garza Montemayor	1807	Casa Blanca	16
Benito Lopez de Jaen	1809	San Antonio de Agua Dulce	2 (app.)
Fernandez de la Fuente	1809	Puenticitas	4 (app.)

Surveyors of the land grants noted in their reports detailed information concerning the topography, the types of flora and fauna, and the hostility of the natives to be found in this region of modern Nueces County. During the survey of the Barranco Blanco Grant, the surveyor noted:

. . . waterholes are surrounded by different forest trees . . .
considerable numbers of wild horses . . . droves of deer, wolves,

Source: Wolf & Bennett
Maps of Texas Counties

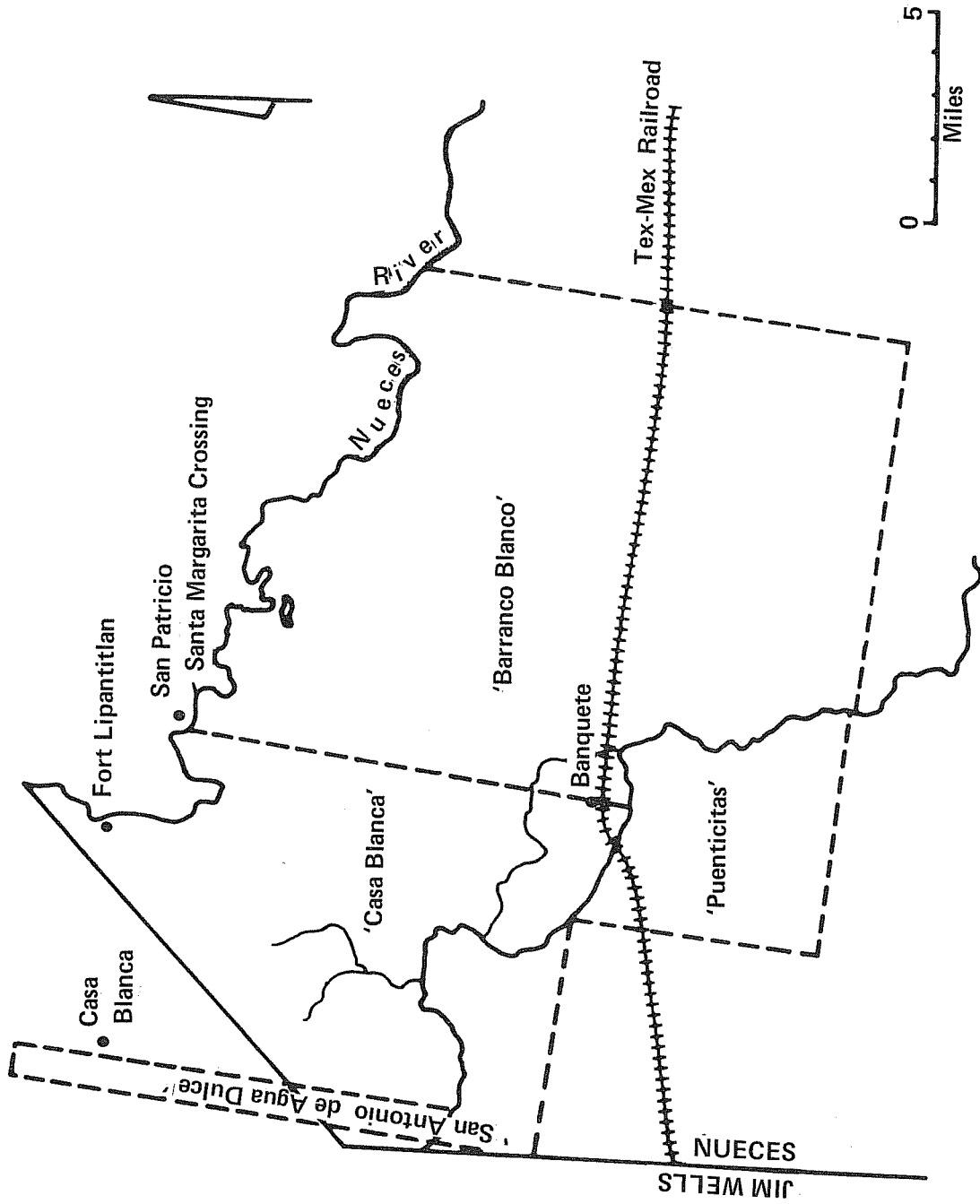


Figure 9. Original Spanish Land Grants in Northwestern Nueces County.

coyotes and snakes, and the ponds and rivers abound with a great number of alligators...(Corpus Christi Public Library files n.d.a:9).

On the 17th of March 1808, the surveyor of the San Antonio de Agua Dulce grant stated:

...the waters are naturally abundant during the rainy seasons, but during such seasons, the waters flow very rapidly and within twenty-four hours after a rain, there is no water in said arroyo (Agua Dulce Creek)...pools of water remain for approximately one year if occasional rains occur and the multitude of wild horses do not frequent them...(Corpus Christi Public Library files n.d.b:17-18).

Cattle and horses constituted the prevailing form of wealth for these first landowners until the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1810. The onset of the war left these settlers unprotected, and with the continuing hostilities of the Indians the settlers took refuge at the towns along the Rio Grande.

Between 1812 and the 1820s Indian uprisings gave little peace to the early settlers of the area. Shortly after 1812, the Casa Blanca, a fortified home constructed by Montemayor on the San Antonio de Agua Dulce Grant, was destroyed by the Indian raids (Nueces County Historical Society 1972:32).

On October 30, 1814, Comanche raids killed 14 persons at the Rancho Diesmero, located in the northern reaches of the Barranco Blanco Grant. The name Diesmero is still preserved along the Nueces River by a small slough (*ibid.*: 31-32).

In 1824, after Mexico won her independence from Spain, the Colony of Nuevo Santander became the State of Tamaulipas. The area was once again open to establishing colonies and the granting of land grants under the Mexican government. In 1831, Fort Lipantitlan (Fig. 9) was established near the Santa Margarita Crossing on the Nueces River to protect new settlers (Nueces County Historical Society 1972:33).

Years of turmoil, war and Indian uprisings left Mexico with little in communication and transportation lines between the Rio Grande and her colonies to the north. Early in 1832, revamping of the Camino Real had started and by June the new Matamoros Road from the Rio Grande to the Nueces River had been completed. The completion of the road was observed by a four day celebration beginning on St. John's Day, June 24, 1832. The event took the form of a festival and conference sponsored by the governor of Tamaulipas and his representatives to meet with the Irish Empresarios McGloin and McMuller of the Villa de San Patricio de Hibernia. The Irish settlement was located just north of the Santa Margarita Crossing on the Nueces River, a place where the Camino Real from Goliad to the Rio Grande crossed the river.

The banquet, called "El Banquete," was marked by pageantry, feasting and games. Today it is remembered in the name of Banquete Creek and the small town of Banquete in northwestern Nueces County (*San Antonio Express* 1932; *Corpus Caller-Times* 1937).

In the fall of 1835, the Texas Revolution broke out. During the struggle for Texas Independence, two engagements occurred in northwestern Nueces County. The first occurred at Fort Lipantitlan, located 12 miles northwest of Banquete. The fort had been garrisoned by the Second Active (Cavalry) Company of Tamaulipas under the command of Captain Nicolas Rodriguez. Texas forces from Goliad under the command of Adjutant Ira Westover captured the fort on November 4, 1835, after a 30 minute engagement (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times* 1959). The last engagement for Nueces County occurred on March 2, 1836, at the Battle of Agua Dulce Creek, approximately five miles northwest of Banquete. The Texas forces under the command of Dr. James Grant were overtaken by General Jose Urrea. The battle of Agua Dulce Creek ended the part Nueces County played in the Texas Revolution (Nueces County Historical Society 1972:38-39).

During the years from 1836 to 1845, the area west of the Nueces River saw the intrusion of Federalist forces and the securing of contraband trade. Lawless frontier men engaged in cattle rustling and also the plundering of Mexican traders and unprotected settlers.

On July 7, 1842, an indecisive battle was fought at Camp Lipantitlan (immediate vicinity of Mexican Fort Lipantitlan) between Adjutant General James Davis and his First Battalion of Texas Volunteers and General Antonio Canales with Mexican Irregulars (Pierce 1969: 93).

On April 18, 1846, the State Legislature incorporated the lands between the Nueces and the Rio Grande into Nueces County (Nueces County Historical Society 1972:56).

After years of disputed claims to the land, a new growth was witnessed. In 1850, a high point in immigration came to Nueces County. There was a re-establishment of trade and commerce, and the Matamoros Road was again active with freight wagons and Mexican traders. In 1849, ranchers and horse traders in the outlying area around Banquete, Nuecestown and San Patricio began to develop and prosper by selling cattle and horses to overland trains for the California gold fields (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times* 1959).

The Civil War years, 1861-1865, brought some minor military skirmishes to Nueces County, but the main impact on the area was the Union blockade of the entire coastline, necessitating overland commerce. Inland, cotton grown in East Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi was transported over the Cotton Road (Matamoros Road) from Santa Margarita Crossing southward through Banquete toward Matamoros. Northward from Matamoros rolled powder, rifles, medicine and other vital imports for the South (Huston 1953:37-38).

The village of Banquete, situated on the Cotton Road, was strategically located for both the Confederacy and local trade. Here the roads forked, one road to Brownsville and Matamoros, another to Camargo and a third to Laredo. Northward the roads forked to Bexar and Goliad. Camp Charles A. Russell was also located at this point (*ibid.*:37).

The 8th Texas Infantry, made up of citizens from Refugio, Bee, Goliad and San Patricio Counties, was organized on May 14, 1862. The Battalion, under the command of Major Alfred M. Hobby, trained at Camp Charles A. Russell and awaited orders to take command of the defenses at Corpus Christi (Xavier 1966:218). On

July 19, 1862, Major Hobby marched from Banquete to Corpus Christi (Official Records 1861-1865:727).

The Civil War in Nueces County was over by the summer of 1864, but again a reign of terror overcame the area. Cattle rustlers, Mexican raiders and a general lawlessness prevailed. From 1865 to 1875, cattle raising once again constituted wealth for the ranchers of Nueces County. The range was overstocked with herds left unattended during the war, and the markets were flooded with Texas beef. Difficulties in transporting stock and in preserving meat made the cattle valuable chiefly for their hides, tallow, bones and horns. Cattle rustling increased and when the price for beef fell, "hide-peelers" supplied the numerous hide and tallow factories. The eventual slaughter of thousands of cattle became so great that this area became known as the "bone yard" (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times* 1959:71). Crude factories sprang up throughout the county and were also supplied with cattle from the many ranches of the area. Mrs. John Rabb, wife of Captain John Rabb who was famous for the Bow and Arrow brand, and W. W. Wright were ranchers from Banquete who each sold some thousand head of cattle for slaughter (Nueces County Historical Society 1972:88).

Records from 1874 show that some 102,000,000 pounds of tallow and \$2,560,000 in hides were shipped from the Texas Coast. On July 24, 1875, the *Corpus Christi "Gazette"* ran the headline "Cattle Getting Scarce" (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times* 1959:71). By the mid 1880s, the era of hide and tallow factories came to an end.

The continuing development of ranching in the county, and the subsequent advancement of fencing, eventually pushed the open range cattle industry to the west. This enabled ranchers to improve and develop new methods in stock raising, and also increased the value of their lands (Nueces County Historical Society 1972:90-92).

By the 1870s, ranchers and businessmen realized the need for better transportation lines to enable them to transport their stock to markets and bring a new economy to the area. In 1875, the Corpus Christi, Rio Grande and Narrow Gauge Railroad became a reality, mostly through the efforts of Uriah Lott. Financial difficulties and slow progress plagued the building of the railroad; however, by 1876, 25 miles of rail had been laid which terminated near Banquete. In 1879, track laying crews reached San Diego, and in 1880 service was opened to Laredo. In 1881, the railroad tied in with the Mexican system and became the Texas-Mexican Railroad (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times* 1959:10J).

The introduction of the railroad, the breaking up of the range, and the migration of settlers into the new fertile lands eventually made Banquete and other small towns in northwestern Nueces County the center of a farming region.

The historical record that follows represents a brief narrative, listed chronologically, of the major events in the history of Banquete and the nearby Banquete Cemetery. In addition, a list of property owners in the immediate vicinity of the cemetery is included in Table 6.

1832 Banquete gained its name from a festival observing the completion of a road linking the Nueces and Rio Grande Rivers.

- 1850 The first mail came to Banquete by stage on regular lines which ran from San Antonio to Brownsville. Mrs. Ada Fogg ran the stage stand (*Robstown Record* 1957).
- 1861-1865 Camp Charles A. Russell was located at Banquete during the Civil War (Official Records 1861-1865:727).
- 1863 Date of oldest marked grave in Banquete Cemetery. Grave of Joseph P. Madray (B. 1840), a local rancher, died of typhoid fever while serving in the Confederate Army. Also buried are other Confederate soldiers and prominent Banquete residents, including members of the Bennett, Elliff, Rabb, Saunders and Wright families. The cemetery property, by tradition, was once the site of stockpens belonging to Sally Scull, a notorious lady horse trader and cotton freighter during the Civil War (Texas Historical Commission Marker 1976).
- 1871 Banquete Common School District formed (*Robstown Record*, 1957). First school was located near the junction of Banquete and Agua Dulce Creeks (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times* 1937).
- 1875 The building of the Texas-Mexican Railroad, passing through Banquete. The rail station was abandoned and Express Office closed in February 1938 (Webb 1952:108).
- 1877 School built at present site in Banquete (Nueces County Historical Society:108).
- 1917 Larger school building erected (*ibid.*).
- 1921 State Highway 44 came through Banquete, running parallel to railroad (*Robstown Record* 1957).

TABLE 6. LIST OF OWNERS OF PROPERTY ADJACENT TO BANQUETE CEMETERY

<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Deed</u>
Spain	Vincente Lopez de Herrera, sons and Gregario Farias	1806	Vol. C:8
Herrera <i>et al.</i>	Juan de la Garza Montemayor	28 Dec. 1811	Vol. C:117
Montemayor <i>et al.</i>	Dionisio O'Farrell	14 Nov. 1848	Vol. C:118
O'Farrell	Sarah Doyle	3 July 1855	Vol. G:56
Doyle (Sarah Harsdorff m.)	J. Williamson Moses	6 Dec. 1860	Vol. H:2-3
*Moses	Rufus Byler	8 July 1863	Vol. O:560- 561
?	Captain John Rabb	?	?
**Mrs. John Rabb	B. A. Bennett	22 Nov. 1878	Vol. N:359
Bennett	Martha S. Bennett <i>et al.</i>	29 Oct. 1894	Vol. I:86-87
Bennett	One acre of land for community graveyard	18 Aug. 1910	Vol. 64:624- 625

*Reference to transaction, no apparent record.

**Prior to above deed, Captain John Rabb deeded land verbally to a Mrs. Rucker and a T. C. Clark. Reference is made in deed to Bennett, no apparent record.

Source: All documents referred to in the list of owners may be found in the Nueces County Clerk's Office: Deed Records, Nueces County Courthouse, Corpus Christi, Texas.

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