

# Archaeological Investigations of the Theo Avenue Realignment, Mission Concepción Portal and Concepción Park, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas



by  
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*Prepared for:*  
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and  
San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department  
San Antonio, Texas



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Center for Archaeological Research  
The University of Texas at San Antonio  
Archaeological Report, No. 415

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## **Management Summary:**

Between May and July of 2010, the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) conducted an archaeological survey of the area to be impacted by the proposed realignment of Theo Avenue, the construction of the Mission Concepción Portal, and the improvements at Concepción Park. The goal of the project was to determine if the proposed improvements would affect any significant cultural deposits. The focus of the investigations was threefold: 1) locate evidence of the Battle of Concepción; 2) discover any prehistoric sites that may have existed on the banks of the old meander of the San Antonio River found within the Area of Potential Effect (APE); and 3) re-discover any irrigation features that would be impacted by the proposed realignment. Investigations were conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 5627 and Dr. Steve A. Tomka, Center Director, served as the Principal Investigator.

The investigations carried out by CAR included archival research, compilation of oral history, and field investigations consisting of shovel testing, extensive backhoe trenching, limited metal detecting and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey. During the field investigations, 115 shovel tests were excavated within the APE. Thirty-five backhoe trenches were excavated to investigate the potential for deeply buried deposits and to search for irrigation-related features. Shovel testing did not produce significant prehistoric cultural deposits, nor evidence of the Battle of Concepción. However, it was able to document extensive disturbances across the APE.

Backhoe trenching revealed a portion of a secondary lateral to the Main Ditch employed by St. Peter's and St. Joseph's Children's Home (St. PJ's) during the early 1900s to irrigate their agricultural fields. We assume that the junction of this secondary lateral with the Main Ditch is nearby and may be within the proposed Theo Avenue Right-of-Way. Both features are associated with agricultural activities carried out at the orphanage and do not date to the Spanish Colonial Period. The bulk of the Spanish Colonial Concepción Acequia desague (discharge channel) appears to be located under the present route of Theo Avenue. The small segment that may be south of the road will not be directly impacted by the proposed construction.

In addition, backhoe trenching within Concepción Park discovered portions of a stone wall lining the bank of the old San Antonio River. We believe that the wall was constructed during the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)-era. The feature may be related to the installation of a pump house by St PJ's Orphanage to access the water of the San Antonio River. The remainder of the wall lines more than 150-feet of the buried bank of the river.

The CCC-era stone wall, the lateral of the Main Ditch of used by St. PJ's as well as the Main Ditch itself will be impacted by the proposed realignment of Theo Avenue. While the early 20th century irrigation features are not as old as the Spanish Colonial Concepción Acequia and desague, they are still vestiges of the continuity in irrigation technology and therefore represent a significant historic resource. All three of these features are found within the proposed Right-of-Way. Therefore, CAR recommends that these features be highlighted through interpretive signage, and we also recommend the exposure of some of these features where feasible and without harm to them and their integration into the planned improvements to Concepción Park. The integration of these significant historical features into the modernization of the park will serve as an important link of the land, its features and its people to the history of the neighborhood and park. In addition, the CAR recommends that selective construction monitoring take place in portions of the project area that will undergo significant grade changes or of activities that will result in deep impacts (i.e., drilling for light pole installations, tree plantings) that could not be investigated to date.

All artifacts and project associated records are permanently housed at the curation facility of the Center for Archaeological Research at UTSA.

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The field crew consisted of Nathan DiVito, Jason Perez, Steve Smith, Lindy Martinez, Cyndi Dickey, and Kelley Denham. Project Archaeologist was Kristi Miller Ulrich. Dr. Steve A. Tomka served as Principal Investigator. Lab processing and curation was conducted under the supervision of Lab Director, Marybeth Tomka. Bruce Moses and Rick Young produced the figures for the report, and Jennifer Thompson and Bruce Moses produced the final InDesign layout of the report.





## Chapter 1: Introduction and Area of Potential Effect

In May of 2010, Rialto Studio, Inc. contracted the Center for Archaeological Research to conduct archaeological services in conjunction with the proposed realignment of Theo Avenue. This contract also included archaeological services associated with the Mission Concepción Portal. The interpretive portal is co-sponsored by the San Antonio River Authority and Bexar County. Finally, in June the Parks and Recreation Department of the City of San Antonio contracted the Center to perform a pedestrian survey of Concepción Park since the proposed Theo Avenue realignment traverses the park and also was accompanied by several improvements to the park, itself. Because the proposed project impacted land that belongs to the City of San Antonio and is in part funded by the City, a political subdivision of the State, the project falls under the jurisdiction of the Antiquities Code of Texas. Since the project also occurs in a historically sensitive area of the City, it also falls under the umbrella of the City of San Antonio Unified Development Code, Chapter 35. As a result, the CAR coordinated with both the Texas Historical Commission, as the agency overseeing compliance with the Antiquities Code as well as with the City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation. Finally, because, while privately owned, a portion of the land that is part of the APE is part of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (SAMNHP), the Center also coordinated with the National Park Service during the project. All investigations were conducted under the Texas Antiquities Permit # 5627 issued by the Texas Historical Commission to Dr. Steve A. Tomka, as the Principal Investigator. In addition the SAMNHP also issued a permit to cover the investigations that took place within the portion of the APE that is also part of the SAMNHP. The SAMNHP permit is SAAN-2010-SCI-002.

### The Area of Potential Effect (APE)

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) is located in southern Bexar County, along the San Antonio River, just southwest of Mission Concepción (Figure 1-1). The City of San Antonio proposed to realign the current

route of a portion of Theo Avenue that runs between the San Antonio River and Mission Road in central San Antonio. The City, in cooperation with the San Antonio River Authority (SARA), Bexar County, and National Park Service, planned to complete a variety of improvements in the APE associated with this project. Currently, Theo Avenue takes a sharp turn to the north once it crosses the channelized San Antonio River and passes between the Concepción Park Swimming Pool and the active channel before making another sharp turn to the east as it heads toward Mission Road. The proposed realignment, which also will involve numerous secondary improvements to nearby facilities, will result in the elimination of these two sharp curves. The land impacted by these proposed improvements is owned by a combination



Figure 1-1. Map of the project area on the San Antonio East, Texas (2998-133) 7.5 Minute Series Quadrangle Map.

of entities including the City of San Antonio, the SARA, and Bexar County and in addition, a portion of the Theo Avenue realignment will go through the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. This portion of the APE is privately owned. Finally, the project area is within the Mission Parkway National Register District.

There are three aspects to this improvements project: 1) the realignment of Theo Avenue; 2) the construction of a Portal overlooking the San Antonio River channel; and 3) various primary and secondary impacts within Concepción Park. Therefore, the overall project APE encompasses Concepción Park, the Mission Concepción Portal improvements, and the construction easement associated with the Theo Avenue realignment (Figure 1-2).

The proposed alignment will proceed directly east after crossing the San Antonio River and will take gentle curves to the northeast and east as it skirts the St. Peter-St. Joseph Children’s Home property. For this first portion of the improvements project, the APE is delineated by the ROW boundary on the south side of the proposed alignment and

the Theo Avenue easement limit on the north side of the avenue. Using these two boundaries, this portion of the APE encompasses an easement that ranges in maximum width from 34-40 meters (108-128 feet). The length of the easement from the bridge to Mission Road is estimated to be roughly 720 meters (2304 feet).

The Mission Concepción Portal portion of the project APE is situated immediately north of the proposed alignment of Theo Avenue overlooking the San Antonio River. These improvements include the construction of wall footings with a projected impact of 4-feet below surface, drilling for piers for light pole footings (6 to 8-feet deep impact), and sidewalks constructed on fill or when and if grading is required, subsurface impacts to a depth of 6-inches.

Within Concepción Park, impacts may include the construction of a covered basketball court, playground facilities, and a trail roughly paralleling the northern edge of the proposed ROW. Construction-related impacts from the installation of this walkway will be shallow, not exceeding more than 6-inches in depth.



Figure 1-2. Aerial of the project area showing the three areas of the APE.



## Chapter 2: Historic Background

The culture history of the region in which Bexar County is situated spans nearly 11,500 years. There are four periods characterized by changes in hunting and gathering technologies, material culture, and the arrival of non-indigenous populations. The periods are labeled: Paleoindian, Archaic, Late Prehistoric, and Historic. The coherent culture chronologies of Central Texas by Collins (1995) and Prewitt (1981) are the standard summaries utilized by many of the regional researchers. Collins' culture chronology for Central Texas (1995 and 2004) is used as a basis in this section with supplemental current research included. The following section will discuss each of the cultural periods, beginning with the Paleoindian and concluding with the settling of Bexar County by European immigrants during the Historic Period.

### Paleoindian Period

The earliest culture period recorded in the region is the Paleoindian Period, which marks the first signs of human populations in the New World. It coincides with the end of the Pleistocene and spans roughly from 11,500-8800 BP (Collins 1995, Collins 2004). Current research has confirmed absolute dates at three sites in Texas; the earliest is from the Aubrey site in Denton County, with radiocarbon assays of  $11542 \pm 11$  BP and  $11590 \pm 93$  BP (Bousman et al. 2004:48). Environmental data suggests that cooler climate was present during the Late Pleistocene as well as an increase in precipitation than what we see today (Mauldin and Nickels 2001; Toomey et al. 1993).

Early perceptions of Paleoindian populations generally conceptualized hunter-gatherers ranging over wide areas in pursuit of now extinct mega-fauna. This view of Paleoindian cultures, much like the dating of the period, is currently being reassessed. While certainly the Paleoindians were exploiting the Late Pleistocene mega-fauna, the people are perhaps better characterized as generalized hunter-gatherers with subsistence strategies that included the use of a wide range of resources, including small game and plants. The Lewisville Site (Winkler 1982) and the Aubrey Site (Ferring 2001) poses faunal assemblages with a wide range of taxa that not only include large mammals but small to medium ones as well. Little information seems to be available on the consumption of plant resources during the Paleoindian period, though according to Bousman et al. (2004) the late Paleoindian component as the Wilson-Leonard site reflects diverse exploitation of riparian, forest and grassland species.

Skeletal analysis of Paleoindian remains indicates that the diets of the Paleoindian and later Archaic hunter-gatherers may not have differed so greatly (Bousman et al. 2004; Powell and Steele 1994).

Clovis and Folsom fluted projectile points used for hunting mega-fauna characterized material culture during the early portion of the Paleoindian Period. Projectile points such as the Plainview, Dalton, Angostura, Golondrina, Meserve, and Scottsbluff are typical of the later portion of the Paleoindian Period. The site types associated with the Paleoindian Period are camps, lithic procurement sites, kill sites, caches, and ritual sites, and burial sites (Collins 1995). Meltzer and Bever (1995) have documented 406 Clovis sites in Texas. One of the earliest documented Paleoindian sites, 41RB1, was a small playa site near Miami in Roberts County, Texas (Bousman et al. 2004:15). According to the radiocarbon assays, the maximum age for the Miami site is  $11415 \pm 125$  BP (Bousman et al. 2004:47).

Sites in Bexar County that contain Paleoindian components include St. Mary's Hall (Hester 1978; Hester 1990), Pavo Real (Collins et al. 2003), and the Richard Beene site (Thoms et al. 1996); Thoms and Mandel 2006). St. Mary's Hall, 41BX229, is located in northern San Antonio, Bexar, County. The site was first encountered in 1972 during the construction of a house just outside the school's property (THO). The Pavo Real site, 41BX52, is located along Leon Creek in northwest Bexar County. The site was first observed in 1970 and has been investigated several times over the past 40 years (Collins et al. 2003). The Richard Beene site, 41BX831, is located along the Medina River in southern Bexar County (Thoms et al. 1996). Early Holocene soils are present at the site with evidence of a possible rock-lined oven (Bousman et al. 2004:46).

### Archaic Period

The Archaic Period dates between ca. 8800 to 1200 BP. The period is divided into three subperiods: Early, Middle, and Late. Johnson and Goode (1994) distinguish between the Late Archaic I and the Late Archaic II. During the Archaic, there is a shift in subsistence strategies to a greater dependence on exploiting of specific local environments. Differences between the subperiods are again marked by changes in the material culture encountered at the sites and site characteristics. Hunting strategies focused on

medium to small game along with the continued foraging for plant resources.

### **Early Archaic**

According to Collins (1995), the Early Archaic spans from 8800 to 6000 BP. Early Archaic point styles include Angostura, Early Split Stem, Martindale, and Uvalde (Collins 1995). The climate during the Early Archaic is characterized by being drier than the Paleoindian Period and witnesses a return to grasslands (Bousman 1998). Mega-fauna of the Paleoindian Period could not survive the new climate and ecosystems, therefore eventually dying out. With the extinction of the mega-fauna, the Early Archaic exploitation of medium to small fauna intensified.

Data recovered from the Wilson-Leonard site reveals the continuation of projectile point forms from the Paleoindian Period, as well as the use of small to medium hearths similar to the previous period. The appearance of earth ovens implies another shift in subsistence strategies. Collins et al. (1998) suggest that the earth ovens encountered at the Wilson-Leonard site were used to cook wild hyacinth along with aquatic and terrestrial resources. Early Archaic human remains encountered in Kerr County (Bement 1991) indicate diets low in carbohydrates in comparison to the Early Archaic populations found in the Lower Pecos region. Stable-carbon isotopes also suggest a low reliance on C3 plants and animals that consume such vegetation (Johnson and Goode 1994:24).

### **Middle Archaic**

Date ranges for the Middle Archaic are from 6000 to 4000 BP (Collins 1995; Weir 1976). Data suggests that there was a population increase during this subperiod. Climate was gradually drying as the onset of the Alithermal drought occurred. Demographic and cultural change likely occurred in response to the hotter and drier conditions. Middle Archaic projectile point styles include Bell, Andice, Calf Creek, Taylor, Nolan, and Travis. Johnson and Goode (1994) postulate that culture transmission from Lower Pecos region explains the appearance of new point styles during the period.

Middle Archaic subsistence focused on the exploitation of nuts and riverine environments (Black 1989a). The accumulation of burned rock middens during the Middle Archaic coincided with this focus on the exploitation of plant resources (Black 1989a; Johnson and Goode 1994). Current research has reassessed when the use of burned rock middens intensified. Data collected from Camp Bowie suggests that intensification occurred in the latter portion of

the Late Prehistoric Period (Mauldin et al. 2003). Little is known about burial practices during this subperiod, though a sinkhole in Uvalde County (41UV4) contained 25-50 individuals (Johnson and Goode 1994:28).

### **Late Archaic**

The Late Archaic is the ending subperiod of the Archaic Period. The Late Archaic spans from 4000 to 1200 BP (Collins 2004). The Late Archaic is marked by the introduction of Bulverde, Pedernales, Kinney, Lange, Marshall, Williams, Marcos, Montell, Castroville, Ensor, Frio, Fairland and Darl projectile points. During the early part of the Late Archaic, there are fluctuations in temperature and rainfall. Populations are believed to have increased throughout this subperiod. The change in climate marks the division between Johnson and Goode's (1994) Late Archaic I and Late Archaic II.

Some researchers believe the accumulation of burned rock middens ceased at this time, though, as discussed in the Middle Archaic section, current research has challenged this notion (Black and Creel 1997; Mauldin et al. 2003). In Johnson and Goode's (1994) summary of the Late Archaic, quite a bit of discussion is devoted to the role of burned rock middens in acorn processing. Skeletal evidence from cemeteries related to the Late Archaic in Central and South Texas suggest the region saw an increase in population which may have prompted the establishment of territorial boundaries and resulted in boundary disputes (Nickels et al. 1998). Human remains dating to this subperiod have been encountered near the Edward's Plateau. Dental evidence shows a high rate of enamel hypoplasia which indicates nutritional stress (Johnson and Goode 1994).

### **Late Prehistoric Period**

The Late Prehistoric Period begins ca. 1200 BP (Collins 1995; Collins 2004), and appears to continue until the beginning of the Protohistoric Period (ca. 700 BP). The term Late Prehistoric is used in Central and South Texas to designate the time following the end of the Archaic period. A series of distinctive traits characterizes the shift from the Archaic to the Late Prehistoric Period, including the technological shift to the bow and arrow and the introduction of pottery. The period is divided into two phases: the Austin Phase and the Toyah Phase.

At the beginning of this period, environmental conditions were warm and dry. More mesic conditions appear to accelerate after 1000 BP (Nickels and Mauldin 2001). Subsistence practices remain relatively unchanged, especially during the Austin Phase. Projectile points associated with the Austin

Phase include the Scallorn and Edwards types. The Toyah Phase is characterized by the prominence of the Perdiz point (Collins 1995).

Most researchers concur that the early portion of the Late Prehistoric period was a time of population decrease (Black 1989a:32). Radiocarbon data has revealed that a number of burned rock middens in Central Texas were used long after the Archaic period ended, and into the Late Prehistoric. Moreover, the certain researchers feel the peak of midden use was after 1950 BP and into the Late Prehistoric (Black and Creel 1997:273). In addition, radiocarbon dates from Camp Bowie middens provide evidence that supports Black and Creel's arguments that burned rock middens were a primarily Late Prehistoric phenomena (Mauldin et al. 2003).

Beginning rather abruptly at about 650 BP, a shift in technology occurred. This shift is characterized by the introduction of blade technology, the first ceramics in Central Texas (bone-tempered plainwares), the appearance of Perdiz arrow points, and alternately beveled bifaces (Black 1989a:32; Huebner 1991:346). Prewitt (1981) suggests this technology originated in north-central Texas. Patterson (1988), however, notes that the Perdiz point was first seen in southeast Texas by about 1350 BP, and was introduced to west Texas some 600 to 700 years later.

Ricklis (1995) contends that ceramics became a part of the archaeological record in Central Texas at about 700 to 650 BP. Early ceramics in Central Texas are associated with the Toyah Phase of the Late Prehistoric and are referred to as Leon Plain ware. The earliest dates for Leon Plain are relative and are based on associations with "Toyah" assemblages. The Leon Plain ceramic type includes undecorated, bone-tempered bowls, jars, and ollas with oxidized, burnished and floated exterior surfaces (Ricklis 1995). Although there are typical attributes associates with Leon Plain, there is notable variation within the type (Black 1986; Johnson 1994; Kalter et al. 2005). This variation is typically attributed to differences in manufacturing methods and cultural affiliation. Stable carbon isotope and nitrogen isotope data suggests that vessels were used to process bison bone grease/fat, mesquite bean/bison bone grease and deer/bison bone grease (Quigg et al. 1993).

Huebner (1991) suggests that the sudden return of bison to South and Central Texas during the Late Prehistoric resulted from a xeric climate in the plains located to the north of Texas and increased grasses in the Cross-Timbers and Post Oak Savannah in north-central Texas. Together, these formed the "bison corridor" along the eastern edge

of the Edwards Plateau and into the South Texas Plain (Huebner 1991:354-355). Settlement shifts into rock shelters such as Scorpion Cave in Medina County (Highley et al. 1978) and Classen Rock Shelter in northern Bexar County (Fox and Fox 1967) have been noted during this period. Cemeteries from this period often reveal evidence on conflict (Black 1989a:32).

## Historic Period

San Antonio began with the establishment of Mission San Antonio de Valero in 1718. Fray Antonio de San Buenaventura y Olivares had briefly visited the site several years prior, and petitioned to set up a mission at the headwaters of the San Antonio River to act as a waypoint in the journey to East Texas. The Marques de Valero, Viceroy of New Spain, granted Olivares' request and granted him permission to proceed (de la Teja 1995). Mission Valero occupied at least two locations before its current spot in the heart of what today is downtown San Antonio. The final location was occupied by 1724.

Five days after Mission Valero was founded, Presidio de Bexar was established. The presidio was to house the Spanish soldiers who had come along with the expedition to found the Mission. Typically, the families that followed the soldiers lived just outside the presidio.

Two years later, in 1720, Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo was established on the opposite bank of the San Antonio River, and to the south of Mission Valero and Presidio San Antonio de Bexar. This mission was established to help Mission Valero serve the local inhabitants, though the help was unwanted by Valero. The original location of Mission San José was along the east bank of the San Antonio River, approximately three leagues from Mission Valero. The mission was then moved to the opposite bank sometime between 1724 and 1729. The mission relocated to its present location during the 1740s due to an epidemic (Scurlock et al. 1976:222).

In 1722, just two years after Mission San José was founded, Mission San Francisco Xavier de Nájera was established. The mission was to serve a group of fifty Ervipiame families that came from the Brazos River area (Schuetz 1968:11). Mission San Francisco Xavier de Nájera was located near or on the present site of Mission Concepción. The mission was unsuccessful due to a lack of funding. An attempt was made to convert the mission into a sub-mission of Valero, but it was not successful (Habig 1968:78-81). Its doors closed in 1726 as a result (Schuetz 1968:11), though Ivey (1984:13) argued that it was due to the natives' lack of interest in entering mission life.

The remaining three missions were established in San Antonio within weeks of each other in 1731. These three missions, Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción, Mission San Juan de Capistrano, and Mission San Francisco de la Espada, were originally missions established in east Texas. When each failed along the eastern border, they were removed to San Antonio. The current location of Mission Concepción is east-northeast of the APE.

In addition to the five missions, the community outside of the mission and presidio, Villa San Fernando de Bexar was established by the Canary Islanders. Prior to the establishment of Villa San Fernando, Villa de Bexar had been settled by 30 presidial soldiers, seven of whom were married and brought their families. Archival research indicates that the Canary Islanders immediately took over the land surrounding the garrison. There had been a lack of cleared land at the time of their arrival, leading Captain Juan Antonio Pérez de Almazan to allow the Canary Islanders the use of the property (de la Teja 1995). The initial plan was for additional Canary Island settlers to be sent to San Antonio after the first group was established. Due to high costs to the Spanish Crown, no more groups were brought to Texas. The Canary Islanders bickered with the current inhabitants of the area, and amongst themselves. In 1731, the Canary Islanders established their own villa, named San Fernando de Bexar, with their own church. The arrival of the Isleños resulted in the first clearly defined civilian settlement in San Antonio.

During the early years of the Villa de Bexar, no formal titles were issued as the property was distributed (de la Teja 1995). If a presidial soldier and his family occupied the property, they likely did not own it. Prior to 1731, soldiers and settlers were issued licenses to build houses on and farm the land surrounding the garrison. The area was considered the royal property of the presidio (Ivey 2008).

During the early years of the Villa de Bexar and San Fernando de Bexar, the property that was granted to the Isleños and the settlers changed hands several times. The Isleños requested more property in the Labores, and attempted to hinder the original settlers from obtaining any more property. Though their efforts were not entirely successful, they did slow the amount of property given to the settlers (de la Teja 1995). As grants were passed out, it appears that the Isleños would sell their original grants to incoming settlers, or current non-Isleño inhabitants, then request an additional grant from the government. By the 1800s, seven families had control of approximately half of the suertes that had been distributed during the mid- to late-1700s (de la Teja 1995).

## **Mission Concepción**

The APE falls on a parcel of land just to the west-southwest of Mission Concepción. The parcel would have been part of the land holdings of the Mission during the Spanish Colonial period. Mission Concepción was one of the three missions that had first been founded in East Texas and later removed to San Antonio. The mission was established in Nacogdoches County in 1716. Over the next two years, the mission was subjected to a severe drought that affected the mission's crops and led to a food shortage. At the same time, smallpox was rampant in the area (Habig 1968). In 1719, an attack on Presidio los Adaes by the French spurred the inhabitants of the East Texas missions to flee the area. The threat of French attack was lessened by 1721, and the missions were reestablished, with protection provided by founding Presidio del Loreto de la Bahía on the site of the French's Fort Saint Louis. The next decade saw little success, and in 1731, Mission Concepción was removed to San Antonio.

Mission Purísima Concepción de Acuña, as it had been renamed when it was relocated to San Antonio, is speculated to have been established at the same location as the first site of Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo, as well as San Francisco Xavier de Nájera. Mission San José was relocated by the time Mission Nájera was established in 1722. Mission San Francisco de Nájera had also abandoned the site by 1729 when Mission Concepción moved to the location in 1731. Archaeological investigations at the site have produced cultural materials that predate Mission Concepción (Ivey and Fox 1999:45).

By 1756, the stone church at the Mission was completed. Lands along the San Antonio River were being irrigated and producing crops. An irrigated farm was located just outside the compound walls (Figueroa and Tomka 2009). A ranch located along the Cibolo Creek raised cattle, sheep, pigs and horses. The mission continued to thrive until 1789, and then witnessed a steady decline until secularization in 1794. The mission lands were divided among the remaining natives at the time of secularization. The church buildings were placed under the care of Mission San José at this time (Habig 1968). Mission Concepción was taken over by San Fernando Church in 1824 (Cook 1980). It appears that the church at Concepción was little used until 1861, though at one time was chosen as the headquarters of revolutionary forces in 1813 (Gonzales 1996). Final secularization of the mission occurred in 1821 when Mexico won independence from Spain. The remaining property, with the exception of the church was sold off (Gonzales 1996).



## Battle of Concepción, October 28, 1835

In early October of 1835, Stephen F. Austin was elected as commander-in-chief of the Army of the People, also known as the Army of Texas (Barr 1990:6; Austin 1907). The army consisted of 3,700 volunteers that joined between October 2, 1835 and April 21, 1836. The first volunteers considered themselves “Federalists” who wanted to restore the Mexican Constitution of 1824 and prevent Santa Ana from gaining more power (Meissner et al. 2007). The army was headed by several leaders, with many ideas on the way independence should be won, which resulted in a lack of organization. Though Austin was elected the commander-in-chief, many didn’t recognize his authority completely and followed their own strategies.

Austin was interested in capturing the Texas capital which at the time was located at San Antonio de Bexar, in present day San Antonio. He felt that by taking the capital, the forces would have an easier task of driving the Mexicans out of Texas (Barr 1990:7). To accomplish the task, Austin took a small contingent of 300 men to push from Gonzales to San Antonio. He sent many scouts up ahead of the troops to insure that they were not caught off guard (Barr 1990:10, 15). Along the way, more volunteers joined, raising the number in his contingent to 400.

He and the 400 men camped at the ruins of Mission Espada, while awaiting a response from Colonel James Bowie, who he had sent further north to find a better location for the troops. Bowie was to return as quickly as possible to allow the remainder of the troops to join them. Austin wrote to Bowie from Espada the following orders:

Head Quarters, Mission Espada, Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>,  
1835. Colonel James Bowie, Volunteer Aid:

You will proceed with the first division of Captain Fannin’s company and others attached to that division and select the best and most secure position that can be had on the river, as near Bejar as practicable to encamp the army tonight, keeping in view in the selection of this position pasturage and security of the horses, and the army from night attacks of the enemy.

You will also reconnoiter, so far as time and circumstances will permit, the situation of the outskirts of the town, and

the approaches to it, whether the houses have been destroyed on the outside, so as to leave every approach exposed to the raking of cannon.

You will make your report with as little delay as possible, SO AS TO GIVE TIME TO THE ARMY TO MARCH AND TAKE UP ITS POSITION BEFORE NIGHT [emphasis in the original document]. Should you be attacked by a large force send an express immediately with the particulars.

S. F. Austin By order. P. W. Grayson, Aid-de-camp (Austin 1907).

Bowie and Fannin led ninety-two men north from Espada, along the San Antonio River. A place in the large bend in the river, just west of Mission Concepción proved to be desirable spot (Figure 2-1).

The river formed a natural cul-de-sac approximately 100 yard across. A flat plain extended from the river to the east towards Mission Concepción. The river itself was located approximately 6 to 10 feet below the plain. Dense trees were located along the river banks. Bowie, not following his instructions, decided to camp in the area rather than returning to Espada. Bowie placed the troops in two locations within the bend. Fannin’s company was located at the southern portion of the river bend, and a group under the direction of Captain Coleman were placed along the northern portion of the curve. Bowie realized that the positions left them vulnerable to a surprise attack by General Cos’ forces, so he placed a sentry in the tower of Mission Concepción and pickets from each company (McKeehan 2003).

Once General Cos was made aware of the revolutionary forces in the area, he decided to take quick action and move on the group before they could muster reinforcements. He sent Colonel Domingo de Ugartechea with 400 men and 2 cannons to intercept the revolutionary troops. That morning of October 28, 1835, a dense fog had descended on the area, making visibility difficult. Austin and Fannin’s men had taken up position along the river bank, which had a steep drop to the river below, forming a natural trench. Ugartechea’s men were placed accordingly: the infantry to the south, and the cavalry along the west side of the river (Figure 2-1). The infantry was to approach from the area to the south, between the Texans and Mission Concepción. The cavalry remained on the opposite side of the river to cut off any chance of retreat (Barr 1990:24; Gray 1975:172). The dense thicket of trees and fog gave additional cover to the Texans, the



Figure 2-1. Map of the proposed site of the Battle of Concepción.

grapeshot, musket balls, and canister shot swept through the pecan trees just above their heads.

Texan sharpshooters picked off the Mexican artillery from the river bank. The Mexican firepower was no match to the Texan long rifles. The Texans were able to take out the Mexican troops before the Mexican's muskets were in range. The Mexican troops attempted to put pressure on Fannin's troops, but Bowie moved Coleman's men to offer aid. The Mexican army was caught off guard by the increase in firepower (Barr 1990). In addition to not having the same shooting distance as the Texan troops, eyewitnesses indicated that the gunpowder that the Mexican troops were using lacked in quality. Reports were recorded that the Texans were hit by bullets that lacked the velocity to pierce the skin, and resulted only in bruises (Gray 1975:173). Realizing that they were not making headway, the Mexican troops fell back, allowing Bowie to move in with a charge. Bowie led the troops in a charge and captured one of the Mexican cannons and turned it against them. The first conflict of the Siege of Bexar ended in approximately 30 minutes, with only one Texan casualty (McKeehan 2003).

Several different accounts of how many Mexicans were killed in the battle leads to confusion on numbers. The official report claims that 16 Mexican soldiers were left on the field, but many more were carried away (Austin 1907). Bowie claimed that the number of dead was 67 (McKeehan 2003). Another source reported that there were 27 bodies, with about 20 carried off or thrown into the river. This source was recorded in the second edition of *A Visit to Texas in 1831* (Gray 1975) which was originally published in 1836. This account has often been overlooked by historians because the author mistakenly referred to the battle as the Battle of Salado, and confused Mission Espada and Mission Concepción. The description of the battle, however, matches the details of the Battle of Concepción (Meissner et al. 2007).

The battle made quite an impression on both the Texan and Mexican forces. The Texans were outnumbered 3 to 1, in a position blocked from retreat, yet they dominated the battle.

The battle for many years was believed to have occurred within the confines of what is known today as Concepción Park. A marker was erected at the time the park was

dedicated to signify that the battle occurred within the confines of the park and the first casualty of the Texas fight for independence. Many researchers felt that bend in the original river channel at Concepción Park was the location of the confrontation. Recent research, though, has shed new light on the event, and utilized maps that indicated that the battle may have more likely occurred in a bend north of the bend at the river at Concepción Park. The location is described as being approximately ¼ mile west of Mission Concepción “where the river curved in a horseshoe away from the mission” (Barr 1990:22). According to the description, two places could potentially be the location. One would be the point at which San Pedro Creek met the San Antonio River across from Concepción Park, southwest of the mission.

The other possible location of the battle is located to the northwest of Mission Concepción in a bend in the San Antonio River that currently has IH-10 running through it. This bend was dramatically reduced at the time of the channelization of the river in 1957. Andrew Jackson Houston, the son of Sam Houston, produced a map in 1938 that showed the location of the battle in this northwest bend in the river, rather than the southwest bend across from San Pedro Creek. To add further credence to the idea that the battle occurred in the northwest bend is the accounts in *A Visit to Texas in 1831* (Gray 1975) which states that the Texian troops camped “beyond” Mission Concepción. Seeing as the troops were moving in from south of town, “beyond” would most likely mean to the north of the mission.

Charles Ramsdell, a noted local historian, also supported the idea that the battle occurred in the northwestern bend. He composed an article that appeared in the *San Antonio Express News* in 1947 that stated his belief that the battle did not occur in such a close vicinity of Concepción Park.

Though it may be that the battle did not occur at Concepción Park, there is a likelihood that the Mexican troops would have crossed through the park on their way to engage the Texans. A figure produced that overlaid the previous route of the river, with the proposed locations of the troops shows that the Mexican Infantry, with a cannon, would have crossed the river near Concepción Park and moved to combat with the Texan troops located in the bend in the river to the northwest of Mission Concepción (Figure 2-1). The Mexican Dragoons would have remained on the western side of the San Antonio River, possibly in line with the current Probandt Street, to cut off any line of retreat for the Texan soldiers.

## The Concepción Acequia

Concepción Acequia is believed to be one of the earliest acequias created in the area. Documents indicate that the permission to construct the acequia was granted in the late 1720s, prior to the occupation of the site by Mission Concepción. It is likely that the acequia was initially constructed to serve Mission San José (Cox 2005). The Concepción Acequia began at a large dam that was located at Presa Street near LaVillita (Cox 2005:28). The beginning was located at a high point in downtown San Antonio which required that a very large cut be made to get the water into the channel. The width of the acequia channel was reported as 20 feet across the inlet (Cox 2005). The acequia returned to the San Antonio River southwest of Mission Concepción, at a point in the river south of the confluence of San Pedro Creek (Cox 2005:28). However, a number of desagues were likely present along its course allowing the return of water into the river when necessary. The Concepción Acequia was ordered closed in 1869 to prevent flooding along the canal (Cox 2005).

H.P. Smith’s 1930’s map of the irrigation system of the missions indicates that the Concepción Acequia ran southward behind or to the east of the mission before returning to the San Antonio River (Figure 2-2). Laterals off the acequia would have run between the acequia and the river to irrigate the mission fields (labors). While his map does not show it, L.C. Navarro’s 1878 map of the area does show a feature that is labeled as a “drain” running west-southwest from Mission Concepción to the San Antonio River (Figure 2-3a).

Navarro was the District Surveyor at the time he produced the map. It is likely that the feature labeled as the drain on the 1878 map is a desague of the Concepción Acequia. The location depicted on the map is supported by archaeological evidence encountered during the realignment of Mission Road (Labadie 1989: Figure 2). It is important to note that the Navarro map shows no drains or ditches emanating from the presumed desague drain and running southward into what later became the St. PJ’s tract. The 1914 map of the same tract does show the route of the Concepción desague at the very top of the map. Given that the acequia was ordered closed in 1869, it is possible that the desague was no longer functional at the time the 1914 map was drawn. However, it is intriguing that an irrigation ditch labeled the “Main Ditch” begins at a bend in the desague and runs south-southeast and a second feature labeled “Lateral” starts at the Main Ditch and runs west-southwest toward the meander of the river. While the Main Ditch is shown as a solid line, the “Lateral” is drawn as a dotted line and has no termination suggesting perhaps that it was not ever constructed. The extension of the Main Ditch to the Concepción desague may mean that when originally



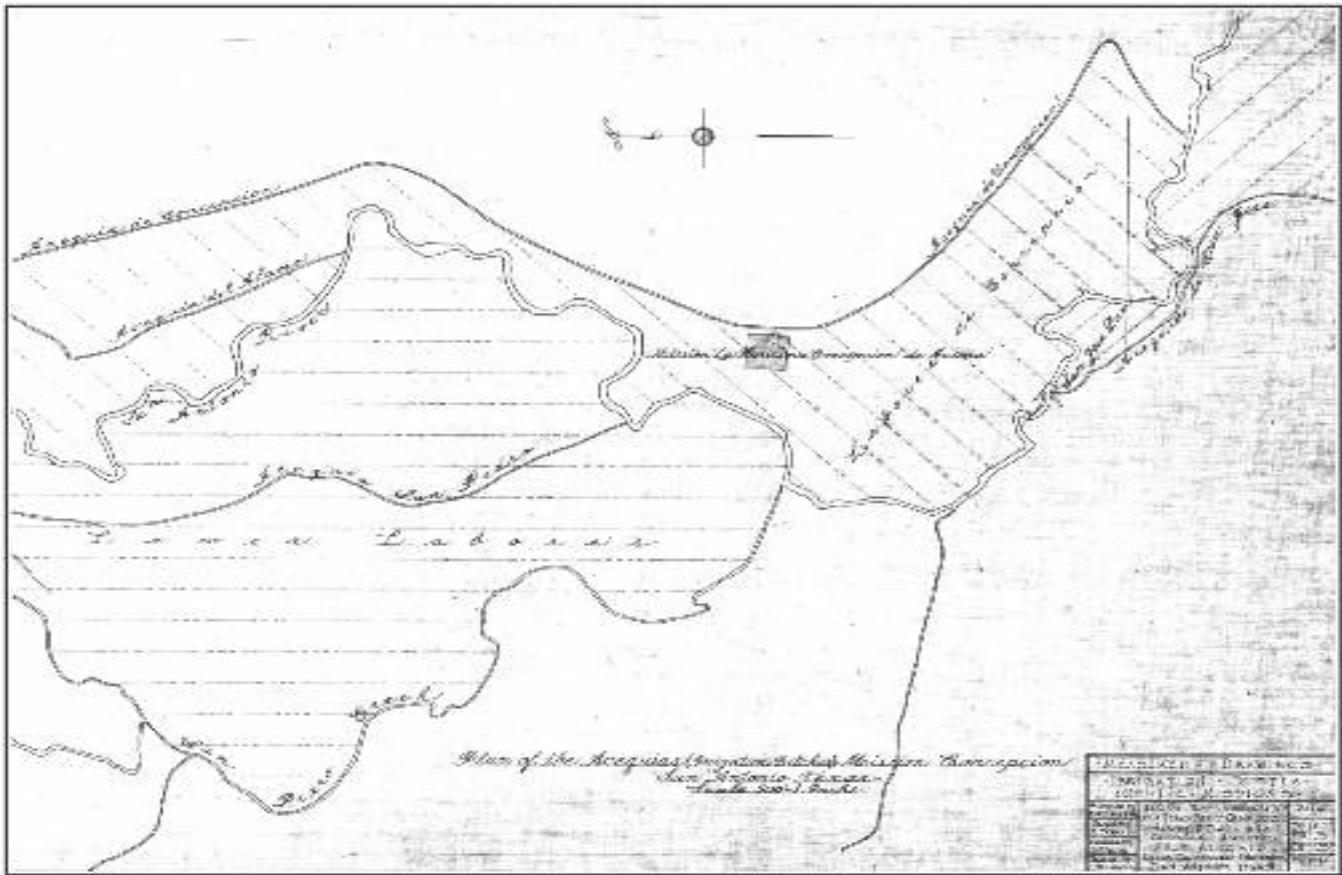


Figure 2-2. Harvey P. Smith map drawn during the 1930's depicting the Spanish Colonial course of the Concepción Acequia and the hypothetical laterals used to irrigate the mission fields.

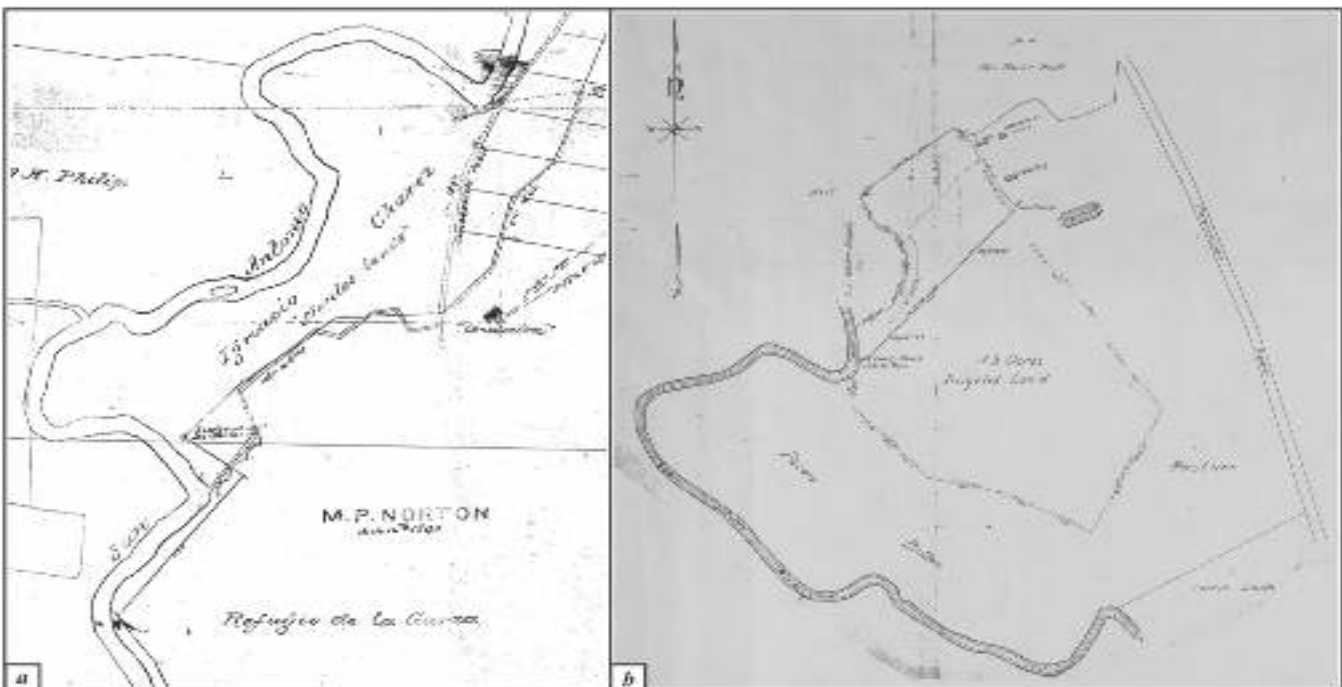


Figure 2-3. 1878 (a) and 1914 (b) maps showing the desague of the Concepción Acequia.

constructed, perhaps as early as 1913 when the St. Peter's Home opened at this location, this portion of the Concepción desague was still operational. By 1914, however, a 6-inch pipeline has been installed across the northern third of the St. PJ's tract and water was being pumped from the meander of the San Antonio River in Concepción Park to a discharge station near the Main Ditch. It is likely that by this time, the water used to irrigate the lands of the orphanage was pumped into the ditch and lateral rather than being derived from the Concepción desague.

### A Brief History of Theo Avenue and Surroundings

Concepción Park was created in 1925 as part of a City Ordinance that was enacted on May 26, 1925. In 1927, a 30-ft lane was created that was to be graded and graveled by the City of San Antonio (BCDR 958:228-235). This road was to be named Theo Avenue and was to intersect with Concepción Road, the road that passed N-S in front of the

Mission. Theo Avenue appears to have been constructed over much of the old desague of Concepción Acequia, with only a small portion of the ditch not affected at the time the road was graded (Figure 2-4).

In 1939, still not much of the area bordering Theo Avenue had been developed (Figure 2-5). While the swimming pool was in existence and one baseball field was in use, only one small cluster of houses was present just northeast of the baseball fields fronting the avenue. At the time, the meander of the San Antonio River was still flowing and only a few driveways can be seen in Concepción Park. A bridge can be seen crossing the meander near the center of the bend (faint white line) and a stone wall can be noted north of it along the eastern bank of the meander (also faint white line).

Apparently sometime around 1927 during the grading for the new route of Theo Avenue, or perhaps at the time that the swimming pool pit was excavated, according to the San Antonio Express (October 31, 1935; Figure 2-6), Mr.



Figure 2-4. The location of Theo Avenue and the Concepción desague.





Figure 2-5. Theo Avenue and Concepción Park in 1939.



Figure 2-6. San Antonio Express newspaper article about finds in Concepción Park.

Walter Fries, a San Antonio resident and steam shovel operator unearthed at least two flintlocks as well as numerous prehistoric stone artifacts on the job site. Exactly where within the park these finds were made is not known. However, the artifacts clearly must have attracted the attention of many residents of the City. While metal detecting was not a hobby in the early 1900's, it has been a common activity practiced by many residents of town and they regularly detected in Concepción Park over the years. How many artifacts were found over the years and of what type is not known. However, it is likely that the effect of such activities has been to reduce the archaeological evidence that may have remained of the battle within the park.

### **St. Peter's and St. Joseph's Children's Home**

The eastern portion of the project area is a parcel of land that was formerly under the ownership of the St. Peter's and St. Joseph's Children's Home, known locally as St. PJ's. The children's home was first opened as the St. Joseph's orphanage in 1874 by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word to attend to girls of the community. The next year, the sisters established the San Fernando School that administered to the children of the orphanage. In 1890, the sisters opened St. John's Orphanage for boys. In 1912, a fire burned St. John's to the ground, taking the lives of five sisters and three boys. For a short time, the boys who survived the fire were housed in an annex at Mission Concepción while a new building at its new location along Mission Road was under construction. In December of 1913, the new building was dedicated and named St. Peter's Home.

The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word began to realize that the accommodations at St. Joseph's were no longer adequate to meet the needs of the girls. Plans were made to renovate St. Peter's and move the girls from St. Joseph's to the new location. In November of 1929, the two orphanages merged into one, and became known as St. Peter's-St. Joseph's Home.

Over the next few decades, the home administered to the children left in their care. The daily lives of the children consisted of prayer, education, chores and recreation. During the Great Depression, many babies were left at the home by parents who were struggling to survive (History of St. PJ's

2010). Over the years, the orphanage transitioned from being run by the Sisters of Charity to a facility that cares for abused, neglected, homeless, and abandoned children overseen by a Board of Governors. Today, St. PJ's still administers to the children in need by offering counseling services, long and short term housing, therapy, and other family services (History of St. PJ's 2010).

Upon starting the current project, the CAR was introduced to a former resident at St. PJ's who offered a portrayal of daily life during his stay at the facility. Richard Garay of San Antonio, Texas came to St. PJ's at about the age of five sometime in the 1950s. His older siblings were already staying at the orphanage, and this is what may have facilitated his acceptance a year earlier than the orphanage usually accepted children. He remembered that each day the children would wake, have some chores to accomplish before going to mass, have breakfast, and then off to classes. Originally, classes were held at the facility, but as the children became older, they attended some of the outside Catholic schools for middle and high school. After classes, additional chores were required before recreation time and dinner. Mr. Garay recalled that the schedule changed during the summer months when school was not in session. Instead of going to classes, the children were allowed free play time, swimming, and sports. Mr. Garay recalled that many hours were spent climbing the trees and playing by the San Antonio River (Garay personal communication 2010).

In addition to the normal chores, Mr. Garay noted that the area located to the west of the orphanage, but not including Concepción Park, were cultivated fields that belonged to St. PJ's. He remembered how they would grow corn and alfalfa in the fields. The fields were irrigated with water that was pumped from the river and pushed into ditches that ran throughout the property. Though it was not in use, Mr. Garay remembered seeing the ditch of the old acequia and that it was lined by anaqua trees, also known as Mexican buckeye (*Unghadia speciosa*). The children would have to spend time in the fields tending to the crops. In addition, he recalled that every time the field was tilled, artifacts possibly relating to Mission Concepción and the local natives were found. He and other children collected projectile points and other items of interest. Mr. Garay remained at St. PJ's until he was 17 (Garay personal communication 2010).





## Chapter 3: Previous Archaeology

### Archaeological Sites in the Area

Four previously recorded archaeological sites are found within a one kilometer radius of Concepción Park. Located to the northwest of the park, and on the west side of the San Antonio River, is 41BX257. The site is recorded as both the Padre Navarro House and the Roy Bean House. The site consists of a tufa stone house that is located at the corner of Glenn and Probandt. The site was recorded in 1974, and was said to have been in need of repair. The structure was likely built in the early 1800s. Little information is available concerning the house, but it is commonly accepted that it was constructed by Padre Navarro, the parish priest of Mission Concepción. The Padre is believed to have operated a ranch between the San Pedro and Concepción Creeks (Ramsdell 1959:144).

The house was occupied in the 1870s by Roy Bean, a man with a very colorful history, moving throughout the South. He ended up in San Antonio sometime around the period of the Civil War. He set up his house in an area that was soon to be named Beanville. He ran a dairy operation while in San Antonio. In 1866, Bean married 18 year old Virginia Chavez. They had four children together, but the marriage is said to have been unhappy. In 1882, Bean left his wife and followed the construction of a railroad in the direction of El Paso (Sonnichsen 2010). Bean was well known for his ability to escape creditors, bad situations and the law as well as his unique way he upheld the law as a judge later in life.

The construction of the house appears to be similar to that of the tufa construction of the Mission Concepción church. An “outdoor” kitchen was said to have been located off the southeast corner of the house. Additions to the structure were likely made during the late 19th to early 20th century (Scurlock et al. 1976).

Located just to the south of Concepción Park, a small site was recorded as 41BX238. The site was identified in 1974, and the property appears to have been in the ownership of the Catholic Archdiocese at the time as part of St. Peter and St. Joseph’s Children’s Home. The site consisted of a small mound in the middle of a recently plowed field that contained lithic material and historic glass fragments. The site was scattered with modern trash as well. Investigators felt that the site lacked research potential and did not recommend further investigations.

Site 41BX1627 is located further to the south, and along the west bank of the San Antonio River. The site was recorded as a farmstead by Geo-Marine in 2005. The site consisted of a small but dense scatter of historic material that dates the occupation of the area to the late 19th to mid 20th centuries. Artifact material that was encountered at the site included white earthenware, ironstone, and yellow ware ceramic sherds, glass fragments in brown, clear, green, olive, and purple colors, animal bone and charcoal. It appears that the channelization of the river in the 1960s had some impact on the site. The site was deemed to have little research potential due to its late age and the presence of fill throughout the area. No further investigations were recommended.

Located to the northeast of Concepción Park is Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña (41BX12). The mission was established in 1731 as one of the three missions that relocated from East Texas. The mission served native groups that originated from Northern Mexico, South Texas and the Texas Gulf Coast (Campbell and Campbell 1985: Table 2). During the later portion of the 18th century, the native population of the mission steadily declined. At the time of secularization in 1789, only 38 individuals resided at the mission (Habig 1968). At the time of secularization, the holdings of the mission were divided into 26 portions and distributed among the native households. The mission buildings themselves changed hands several times over the next few decades. In 1841, Bishop Odin began to purchase old mission property to return to the church’s holdings. The chapel remained under the care of the church, though was not in use between secularization and about 1861. The Archdiocese regained control of the church and some of the mission ground in 1911. In 1978, Mission Concepción became part of the National Park Service’s San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (Figueroa and Tomka 2009). Concepción Park falls within the boundaries of the Mission Parkway National Register District.

### Previous Archaeological Investigations in the Area

Several archaeological investigations were conducted in the vicinity of Concepción Park. Many of the investigations occurred prior to changes in Mission Road, the route of the River, and various other changes to the topography near Mission Concepción. Three investigations occurred that would have included the confines of Concepción Park. The first occurred in 1976 and was sponsored by THC. The survey

was conducted prior to the construction of Mission Parkway and was undertaken to determine what cultural resources were located within the vicinity of the road. Eighty-four prehistoric and historic sites were recorded along the route of the road. No significant cultural remains were found within Concepción Park, though the park was listed as MP-47. The description of the battle location also included the disclaimer that Concepción Park may or may not be the actual location of the Battle of Concepción. The report urged that further research should be conducted to locate and document the site (Scurlock et al. 1976:107).

A later survey that included a portion Concepción Park was conducted in 1980 under the sponsorship of the National Park Service (NPS). The project was undertaken to gain information concerning the layout of Mission Concepción and the potential path to re-route Mission Road. These investigations consisted of two phases of the three phase project. Archival research was conducted to locate architectural features, the acequia, and review the occupation of the site in Phase I. Phase II consisted of excavations around the mission compound to determine the layout of the building and the occupational sequence. Results of the findings were used to aid in the placement of Mission Road (Ivey and Fox 1999).

The third survey conducted within the park occurred in 1981. This was part of the Mission Parkway Survey that was conducted by the CAR for the NPS and Phase III of the project started in 1980. This portion of the project focused on performing archaeological investigations at four proposed development areas and 13 remote-sensing anomalies. The investigations included an area south of Theo Avenue that contained a portion of the acequia, and the stone quarry. The area was reportedly bulldozed in 1960 (Ivey and Fox 1999).

In 1998, CAR conducted archaeological surveys for the Texas Department of Transportation as part of the Mission Trails Statewide Transportation Enhancement Project. The project preceded the construction of the hike and bike trail system that would connect the five missions of San Antonio. No significant finds were recorded during the investigations that were conducted within the vicinity of Mission Concepción during this project, although the results of archival research carried out suggested that the previously suspected location of the Battle of Concepción may not be correct. An alternate

location was proposed in the report of the project findings (Meissner et al. 2007).

The last survey in the vicinity of the APE was conducted by Raba-Kistner Consultants, Inc. in 2009. It involved the survey of 55-acres of property belonging to St. P.J.'s and located to the south of the current project APE. A previously recorded site, 41BX238 was revisited and found to be not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or for formal designation as a State Archeological Landmark (Held 2009).

### **Geotechnical Engineering Study**

Arias & Associates (2010) conducted geotechnical investigations along the proposed route of Theo Avenue to examine the engineering properties of the soil and groundwater conditions that would be encountered during the construction phase. The results of the study were used in preparation of pavement designs. Three backhoe trenches (test pits) and two soil borings were excavated as part of the study. The test pits were excavated to a depth of 6 feet below surface, whereas the soil boring went to a depth of 10 feet below the current surface. A CAR archaeologist monitored the subsurface investigations.

Soil classifications and logging were conducted as the trenches and borings were excavated. Samples of the soils were collected and returned to the geotechnical laboratory for final classifications. Pocket Penetrometer tests were recorded on the clays and the standard penetrations test were noted on the boring logs. The values recorded aided in determining the consistency and strength of the subsurface materials. Samples of soils that were returned to the laboratory underwent testing to determine water content, expansion characteristics and percent passing the #200 sieve.

The soils encountered within the project area consisted of alluvial deposits overlying clays of the Midway Formation. The alluvial soils consist of floodplain deposits primarily of clays that contain varying amounts of silt, sand, and gravels. The study found that the clays were of low plasticity, though one test pit had a higher plasticity than the others. The construction of Concepción Park and flood improvement projects resulted in numerous patches of fill throughout the project area (Arias & Associates 2010).

## Chapter 4: Field and Laboratory Methods

Several distinct field methods were employed to investigate the three parts of the APE. The methods were tailored to inspect a combination of shallowly- and deeply buried deposits as well as identify battle-related artifacts, if present, and any other features that may have turned up during the investigations. One hundred percent of the APE was subjected to pedestrian survey accompanied by shovel. In addition, a large number of backhoe trenches were excavated throughout the proposed realignment and within Concepción Park. Below we discuss the specific field methods used to investigate each of the three portions of the APE.

### The Proposed Theo Avenue Realignment

Archaeological investigations, in the form of shovel testing, were carried out along the proposed alignments to ensure that battle associated artifacts and/or features were documented, if present. The principal question that was to be addressed through this shovel testing centered on whether there were any cultural features and/or historic materials within the zone to be impacted by the new route of Theo Avenue. In addition to the shovel testing, the banks of the former meander of the San Antonio River were also investigated using backhoe trenches to determine if deeply buried prehistoric deposits existed within the road realignment easement.

During the project, CAR field technicians excavated shovel tests approximately every 25 meters along the proposed easement of Theo Avenue. This rate of shovel testing exceeds the minimum survey standards (1 ST per 100 meters, approx.) of the Texas Historical Commission. Twenty-nine shovel tests (STs 1-7, 21-40, 94 and 95) were excavated along the proposed realignment ROW. Six of these shovel tests (28-31 and 94-95) fell outside of the alignment as they were excavated before the center line of the easement was staked by the contractor. The results of these six units will not be discussed in the Results Chapter since they are outside of the current project limits. In addition, four backhoe trenches (BHTs 20-21, 23, and 30) were excavated along the alignment in search of deeply buried prehistoric deposits and/or main ditch and lateral.

### The Mission Concepción Portal

Given that the anticipated depth of impacts in constructing the Portal would range from 6-inches to a maximum possible depth of 8 feet below the surface, CAR proposed

a combination of backhoe trenching and shovel testing to examine the area for buried deposits. Nine shovel tests (STs 9, 12, 15-20) were used in areas where impacts were projected to be shallow and a backhoe trench was used in the area of the wall footings. The area that was investigated for the Mission Concepción Portal was highly disturbed by past utilities installations. A backhoe trench (BHT 17) was placed in an area that would not damage the water lines, and offer a glimpse of the subsurface soils to be impacted by the construction of the portal. The drilling of the light pole footings will occur at a future date and these activities will be monitored during the construction phase of this project.

### Concepción Park

The installation of the mini-sidewalk and lighting fixtures along the path also is expected to result in similar impacts to those outlined above. Other impacts may result from the relocation of playground facilities or construction of other facilities (i.e., covered basketball court) within Concepción Park. Design plans for the types and specific locations of these facilities had not yet been finalized at the time of the fieldwork. Therefore and rather than delaying the archaeological investigations to specific and yet undetermined locations of impact, given the high volume of use the park is expected to receive, the archaeological consultant conducted a 100 percent survey of the entire 20.3-acre park. Please note that this acreage does not include the additional tract east of the current park that runs to Mission Road. This tract, which measures roughly 15-acres, was also surveyed.

The survey relied on shovel testing to explore shallow deposits and backhoe trenches to search for deeply buried deposits and acequia channels. As part of the Concepción Park survey, CAR field technicians excavated 80 shovel tests at a rate of 2.33 STs per acre (80/35.2-acres). Of these, 60 STs were excavated within Concepción Park proper, at a rate of 3 STs/acre. This shovel testing rate again exceeds the minimum standards of the THC for aerial surveys (1 ST every 2 acres) and was adopted to ensure that a sufficient aerial coverage of the park was accomplished. The rate of shovel testing dropped to 1.3 STs/acre outside of Concepción Park proper (15-acres 20 STs). This rate also exceeded the THC minimum standard. In addition, the CAR crews excavated 28 backhoe trenches (BHTs 1-16; 18-19, 24-29; 31, 34-36) within the extended park boundaries (i.e., 35.2-acres). Some of these were designed to locate buried prehistoric deposits while others were to discover the route of the acequia lateral.

## Survey Methodology

All shovel tests were 30 cm in diameter, and unless prevented by obstacles, extended to a depth of 60 cm below surface along the route of the linear survey. Shovel tests were excavated in 10-cm levels, and all soil from each level was screened through 1/4-inch hardware cloth. All encountered artifacts were recovered with appropriate provenience information for laboratory processing and analysis. A shovel test form was completed for every excavated shovel test. Data collected from each shovel test included the final excavation depth, a tally of all materials recovered from each 10-cm level, and a brief soil description (texture, consistence, Munsell color, inclusions). The location of every shovel test was recorded with Trimble Geo XT GPS units. Shovel test locations also were sketched onto an aerial photograph as a backup to GPS information. Any additional observations considered pertinent also were included as comments on the standard shovel test form.

The backhoe trenches were at least 3-5 meters (9-16.5-foot) long and approximately 1-meter (3.3-foot) wide. They did not exceed approximately 1.5 meters (4.9-foot) in depth. Selected portions of trench walls were profiled that illustrated unique depositional histories. The placement of the backhoe trenches was made at the discretion of the Project Archaeologist and Principal Investigator with the intent of discovering deeply buried cultural remains.

Similarly, the geotechnical borings that were conducted during the course of the project were monitored to observe the depths of fill distributed across the APE and determine if any cultural deposits are observed. While the impacts from the borings was minimal (3-inch diameter cores), this data may at least provide information of deeply buried archaeological deposits that may otherwise not be discovered.

Finally, because the discovery of battlefields is often a difficult endeavor often due to the low density and scattered nature of the artifacts deposited during a battle, it was proposed to conduct a metal detector survey of the project APE. The survey occurred in portions of the APE that were thought to have been less disturbed and its goal was to determine if any metal artifacts can be identified that are the product of or remnants from the Battle of Concepción. It was expected that a large number of “hits” were to be produced during the survey as a result of the modern occupation and use of the area. CAR enlisted the help of the members of the San Antonio Area Detector Club and the Austin Area Detector Club to aid in the metal

detecting effort. Each member was paired with a CAR staff archaeologist. As the metal detector would have a “hit”, the archaeologist would dig with a trowel or sharpshooter shovel to locate the object. During these metal detecting surveys, unique items were collected and their locations mapped using the Trimble GPS unit or on an aerial of the project area.

Rialto Studio Inc., the prime contractor on this project, prepared several comprehensive maps of the APE that showed the distribution and, when available, the depth of modern-fill across the project area. The CAR used these documents to guide and tailor all of the archaeological investigation methods and techniques described above to ensure that sensitive areas are thoroughly investigated and efforts area efficiently allocated in areas with little or no disturbances or fill.

During the pedestrian survey, only temporally diagnostic artifacts were to be collected from surface. Any artifact recovered from the ground surface that was not associated with a site was recorded as an isolated find. The location of all isolated finds was plotted with a GPS unit and plotted on an aerial. All artifacts from shovel tests were collected and returned to the Center for analysis and curation.

## Ground Penetrating Radar Survey

To help relocate a portion of the acequia and lateral that appears on historic maps of the APE, CAR enlisted the help of the Texas Historical Commission (THC) and their expertise with ground penetrating radar (GPR). Tiffany Osburn of THC conducted the GPR survey in the eastern portion of the APE near the St. PJ’s fence-line. The survey was conducted along ten-meter long transects and covered an area located immediately south of BHT 21, where a cross-section of the acequia lateral was identified earlier during the project. Transects were oriented approximately east-west. The readings were examined in the field and when positive indications were noted of the likely presence of the acequia, a backhoe trench was excavated within the transect and the outlines of the acequia trench were sought in the trench profiles. Approximately 180 square meters were examined with the GPR. Three backhoe trenches (BHTs 34-36) were excavated to allow the ground-truthing of the results of the GPR survey.

## Laboratory Methods

All cultural material collected during the survey was prepared in accordance with federal regulation 36 CFR

part 79 an in accordance with current guidelines of the Center for Archaeological Research. Artifacts were processed in the CAR laboratory where they were washed, air-dried, and stored in archival-quality bags. Acid-free labels were placed in all artifact bags. Each label displayed provenience information and a corresponding lot number laser printed or written in pencil. Artifacts were separated by class and stored in acid-free boxes identified with standard labels.

All project-related paper work was permanently curated at CAR. Field notes, forms, and hard copies of photographs were placed in labeled archival folders and converted into electronic material. All field forms were completed in pencil, though stored in archival quality page protectors due to their soiled nature. A copy of the report and all digital material were burned onto a CD and permanently curated with the field notes and documents at the Center for Archaeological Research.





## Chapter 5: Results of Investigations

Between May and July 2010, CAR staff carried out the field investigations described in the previous chapter. As part of these investigations, 115 shovel tests were excavated over the entire APE. In addition, 35 backhoe trenches were excavated throughout the project area to search for deeply buried prehistoric deposits, the route of the Main Ditch and lateral of the acequia shown on the 1914 map of the St. PJ's Orphanage, and uncover segments of a stone wall lining the west bank of the San Antonio River.

### Theo Avenue Realignment

Twenty-nine shovel tests were excavated along the route of the road (Figure 5-1). Twenty-three of these fell within the project APE. Of these, seven were excavated within the portion of the easement that crosses the developed portion of Concepción Park. The remaining sixteen shovel tests were excavated between the park and the St. PJ's property. These were placed in areas with ground surface visibility ranging only from 10-25 percent. A portion of this section passed by an old Catholic

Youth Organization (CYO) baseball field that has been in disuse for many years. The remaining six shovel tests were excavated along the route of the road through the property currently used by St. PJ's as part of their playground.

In general, artifacts recovered from the shovel testing consist of a mix of material (Table 5-1). The shovel tests that were excavated within the main portion of Concepción Park revealed disturbed soils and the artifacts that were collected were modern in nature. Typical artifacts encountered included glass fragments in clear, brown, green, and aqua colors (Table 5-1). One fragment of purpled glass was recovered from Shovel Test 2 at 20-30 cm below surface. The animal bone fragments that were recovered from the shovel tests typically were rib bones that appear to be discarded during everyday picnics held at the park. The pedestrian survey of the area revealed that there was much modern trash on the surface in the form of pull tabs, crown caps, glass fragments, plastic fragments, paper wrapper, and faunal remains that looks like to be the refuse of pork and beef ribs.



Figure 5-1. Aerial of the APE showing proposed route of Theo Avenue, the old San Antonio River Channel, locations of shovel tests, backhoe trenches, and possible path of the main ditch and lateral.

Table 5-1. Artifacts Recovered from Shovel Tests Along the Survey of the Proposed Route of Theo Avenue

Providence	Organics			Lithics		Glass						Building Material		Metal		Mussel shell		Other			Totals			
	bone	bamboo	charcoal	burned rock	debitage	aqua	brown	clear	flat	green	light green	purpled	brick	tile	unident.	scrap	ct	wt (g)	cigarette lighter	US Penny	Plastics	Total Count	Total weight (g)	
																								ct
Shovel Test #01																								
1 (0-10 cmbs)																	1	0.2				1	0.2	
2 (10-20 cmbs)								2														2		
Shovel Test #02																								
3 (20-30 cmbs)	1	0.9			2						1											4	0.9	
Shovel Test #03																								
2 (10-20 cmbs)										2					1							3		
Shovel Test #04																								
1 (0-10 cmbs)	1	0.4			1		1	1														4	0.4	
2 (10-20 cmbs)								7														7		
3 (20-30 cmbs)					1		1			1												3		
Shovel Test #05																								
1 (0-10 cmbs)								1	1		2		2		4						5	15		
2 (10-20 cmbs)											1											1		
3 (20-30 cmbs)								3														3		
4 (30-40 cmbs)								5	1											1		8		
6 (50-60 cmbs)					1																	1		
Shovel Test #06																								
1 (0-10 cmbs)																2						2		
Shovel Test #07																								
1 (0-10 cmbs)	1	13.9	1												6				1	2		11	13.9	
2 (10-20 cmbs)							1	1	1						1					1		5		
3 (20-30 cmbs)								1														1		
4 (30-40 cmbs)					1																	1		
5 (40-50 cmbs)	1	0.8		1																		2	0.8	
6 (50-60 cmbs)	1	0.1		1																		2	0.1	
Shovel Test #21																								
1 (0-10 cmbs)								6			3											9		
3 (20-30 cmbs)								1														1		
Shovel Test #32																								
1 (0-10 cmbs)					1											1						2		
3 (20-30 cmbs)														1								1		
Shovel Test #35																								
1 (0-10 cmbs)										1				1								2		
Shovel Test #37																								
1 (0-10 cmbs)										1												3	4	
2 (10-20 cmbs)					1																1	2		
Shovel Test #39																								
1 (0-10 cmbs)								1	1					1			2				1	6		
2 (10-20 cmbs)														1								1		
Grand Total	5	16.1	1	2	5	4	1	28	7	2	6	3	1	5	1	13	4	1	0.2	1	1	13	104	16.3

The metal detecting that occurred along the proposed route of the realigned Theo Avenue did not produce significant results. In general, the most commonly encountered artifacts were pull tabs and fragments of tin foil. On a few occasions, coins were found. If the coin was of recent date (1970 to present), the item was not collected by CAR archaeologists.

Four backhoe trenches were excavated within the path and in the vicinity of the proposed route of the realigned Theo Avenue. These trenches include BHT 20, 21, 23, and 30.

BHT 20 was excavated on top of the ridge just to the west of the currently used utility road for the expansion of the Riverwalk. The road was being used to haul soils removed

from the banks of the San Antonio River to make ready for the hike and bike trail. BHT 20 was placed in this location due to the potential for encountering a lateral of the main ditch that was noted on several of the early maps of the area (see Figure 2-3b). After consultation with SARA officials, the trench was placed in an area that would not disturb any existing trees. The trench was approximately 10 meters in length and 1 meter in depth. Heavy clay was encountered at the base of the trench (Figure 5-2). Approximately 70 cm below the surface, the soil changed to grayer silty clay with roots throughout. Just above the silty clay level was a sandy soil that had gravels that ranged from 1 to 5 cm in diameter. A thin layer of clay loam was noted at the surface. The upper levels of the trench produced modern glass and metal fragments and these were not collected. The layer of gravel was an interesting find, and when the location of the trench was placed on an aerial showing the APE during the 1930s, it was found that the gravels may be part of an old work road possibly utilized by the CCC.

BHT 21 (Figure 5-1) was placed along the southern edge of the proposed road easement, near the fence-line of St. PJ's. The trench was placed in this location to attempt to locate the main ditch that appeared on a 1914 map of the area (Figure 5-3).

The map was overlaid on a current aerial photo of the project area to help determine the location. Initial excavation of the trench did not appear to reveal any

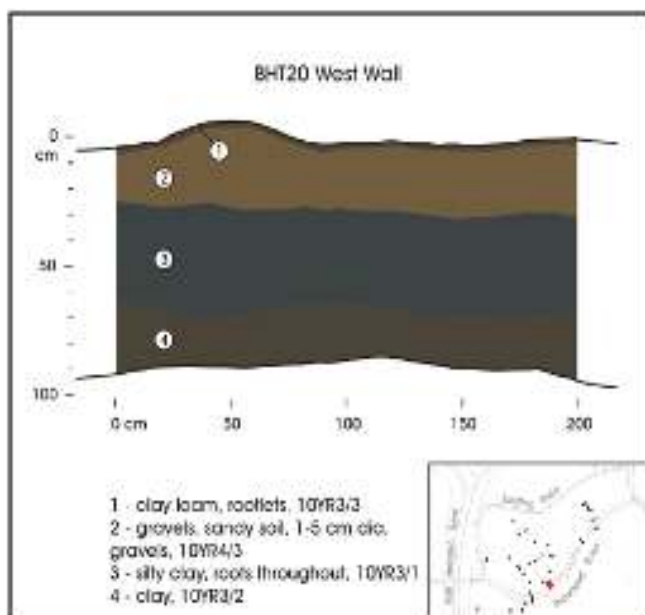


Figure 5-2. Profile of the west wall of BHT 20.



Figure 5-3. 1914 map of the APE showing the location of the Main Ditch and lateral.

indication of the main ditch. The soils encountered consisted of a top layer of dark brown clay loam, with a distinct change in color and soil to a tan caliche. Prior to backfilling the trench, the project archaeologist asked the backhoe operator to extend the trench a few more meters to the west. The lengthened portion of the trench revealed an outline of a ditch. The ditch outline extended to a depth of 1 meter below surface, and was approximately 1.3 meters in width at the base (Figure 5-4). No cultural material was noted in the trench or within the outline of the main ditch. At this point in the fieldwork, it was assumed that the outline seen in the walls of the trench was that of the St. PJ's Main Ditch. However, additional backhoe trenching lead to a change in perspective by the completion of the field investigations.

BHT 23 was excavated at the base of the slope that delineated the east bank of the old channel of the San Antonio River along the proposed route of Theo Avenue. A map of the area produced in 1933 depicted a stone wall, foot-bridge, and planters in the park (Figure 5-5).

While no stone wall is shown in the area, the excavation of BHT 23 did uncover a portion of a stone wall. The wall extended to a depth of 1.5 meters below surface, with the top of the wall approximately 50 cm below the surface, in places. The stone wall appears to have been constructed of cut





Figure 5-4. A lateral to the Main Ditch seen in the north wall of BHT 21.

limestone, and using a yellowish mortar that appears to be degrading (Figure 5-6).

The top of the wall was covered with a layer of cement (Figure 5-7). The initial discovery of the wall only revealed an approximate 5 meter portion.

Near the base of the trench, a pocket knife was recovered that was inscribed with “USA 190 HR 76” (Figure 5-8). The pocket knife may indicate that a company of CCC workers constructed the rock wall sometime during the 1930s. At a later date and following consultation with project members, more of the wall was uncovered to determine if the ends of the wall could be found. The southern portion of the wall made a sharp turn into the old river bank, and abruptly ended approximately 3 meters into the bank. The location of this end is very near the remnants of a



Figure 5-5. 1933 map of a portion of the APE with location of stone wall, foot bridge, and planters.



Figure 5-6. Stone wall uncovered in BHT 23, facing southeast.



Figure 5-7. Top of the stone wall in BHT 23, facing north.



Figure 5-8. Pocket knife recovered next to the wall in BHT 23.

pump house consisting of two pads of red brick found along the ridge (Figure 5-1).

The trench was exposed over the course of two days to the north of the proposed route of Theo Ave. The rock wall was fairly straight until it reached the area near the confluence of the old river channel and a temporary drainage that follows the base of an ancient terrace of the San Antonio River (Figure 5-9). From this point on, the wall made several curves, in and out of the old river channel (Figure 5-10). As the wall wrapped around the curve to the old drainage, a portion of the wall appeared to have a slight dip as the wall continued to the east (Figure 5-11).

This appears to have been where the old drainage that wrapped around the baseball fields at the base of the ancient terrace met and emptied into the old river channel. The wall continued to the north from here. Rather than continue the trench to follow the wall to the north, the project archaeologist opted to put in a few test trenches several meters apart, perpendicular to the path of the wall to see how far up the old river channel the wall extended. The wall was encountered in a test trench that was excavated just to the southwest of BHT 31. The trench was opened to reveal the path of the wall. As the trench was opened to the north, the wall was found to be disturbed and broken (Figure 5-12).

Several blocks of rock from the wall appear to have been knocked into what was the old river channel. Another test trench was excavated between BHT 5 and BHT 31 in the old river channel to see if the wall was still present. Several cut limestone fragments were encountered in this trench, but no



Figure 5-9. Stone wall further uncovered in BHT 23, facing north.



Figure 5-10. Bends in the stone wall.



Figure 5-11. Dip in the top of the stone wall where it appears to meet a concrete culvert, possibly a drainage from along the baseball fields.





Figure 5-12. Edge of the stone wall near BHT 31 where it appears to have been disturbed.

intact wall segment was noted. The last trench to find the wall was excavated just to the west of BHT 5. No remnants of the wall were noted.

Throughout the entire excavation of BHT 23, a large quantity of modern material was encountered, though not collected. Most common items encountered included clear and brown glass fragments, animal rib bones, metal fragments, tin can fragments, and various plastic items. In the northernmost portion of the trench containing the intact wall, a fragment of Decalcomania ware was noted. Decalcomania is a type of white earthenware that started being produced in the United States during the 1890s. A few items were collected that were unique, although modern in age. These included a small, brown glass medicine bottle, a wheel assembly, and a blue glass marble. One core was collected from the trenching. It was the only prehistoric item seen in the deposits and is likely to be in a secondary context.

BHT 30 was excavated in the eastern portion of the project area (Figure 5-1), along the proposed route of Theo Avenue. The backhoe trench was placed here to examine the nature of a dark line that is visible on the 1939 aerial of the project area. In the aerial, a dark line runs through the cultivated fields. It was thought that this line may represent a lateral off the main ditch. The trench did not reveal any signs of a lateral. The soils were slightly different from the trenches excavated in the northeastern portion of the field. The deposits revealed disturbances that were likely derived from the construction of the old CYO baseball field located immediately to the southwest.

### Mission Concepción Portal

Nine shovel tests were excavated in this area, and one BHT. Prior to the excavation of shovel tests and the BHT, maps created by Rialto Studio Inc., were consulted to determine the extent of disturbance that had already occurred in the area. One of these maps is shown in Figure 5-13.

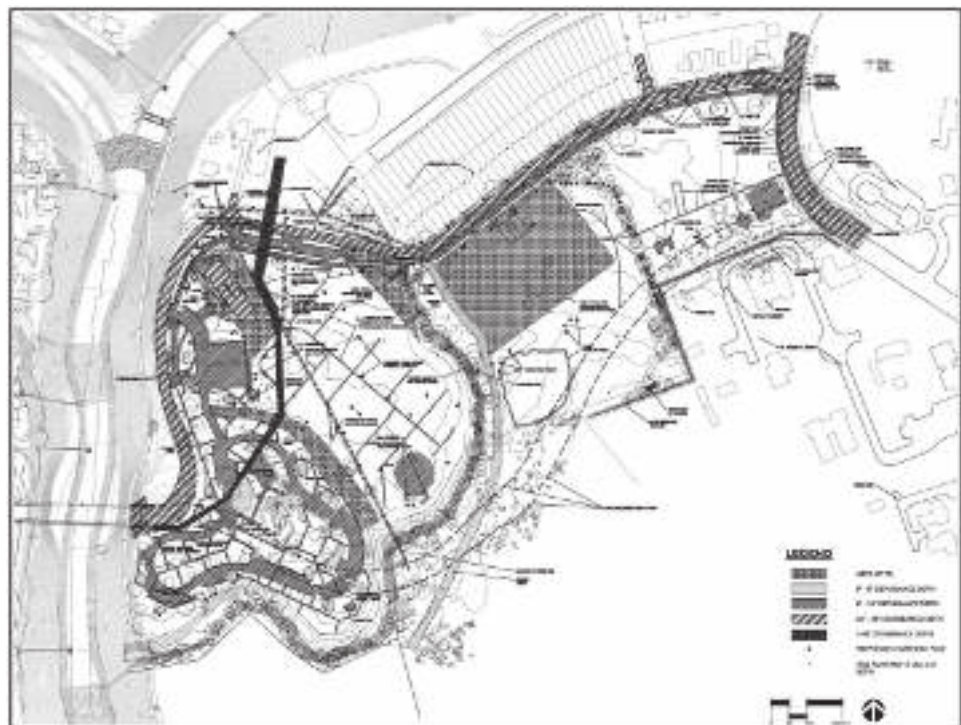


Figure 5-13. Map of disturbances within the APE (map courtesy of Rialto Studio, Inc.).

The maps indicated many subsurface electrical and water lines throughout the area, as well a large amount of fill within the old river channel. To better sample the area, the shovel tests were placed in areas away from the buried lines and on the edge of the river channel fill. The one BHT was placed in an area that was to miss the water main and other subsurface disturbances.

The shovel tests revealed that the area was highly disturbed by the development of Concepción Park (Table 5-2). Artifacts recovered from the shovel tests consisted of bone, glass fragments, plastic fragments, metal fragments, and building material. Shovel Test 19 produced the highest density of artifacts. All levels excavated in this shovel test produced material, though none was considered historic in age. The material is consistent with the modern trash found throughout the park.

BHT 17 was placed to the south of the old river channel, between STs 16 and 18 (Figure 5-1). The BHT was excavated to a depth of 1.5 meters and was approximately 3 meters in length. BHT 17 revealed disturbed soils, with fill present in the profile (Figure 5-14). No cultural material was noted during the excavation of the backhoe trench.

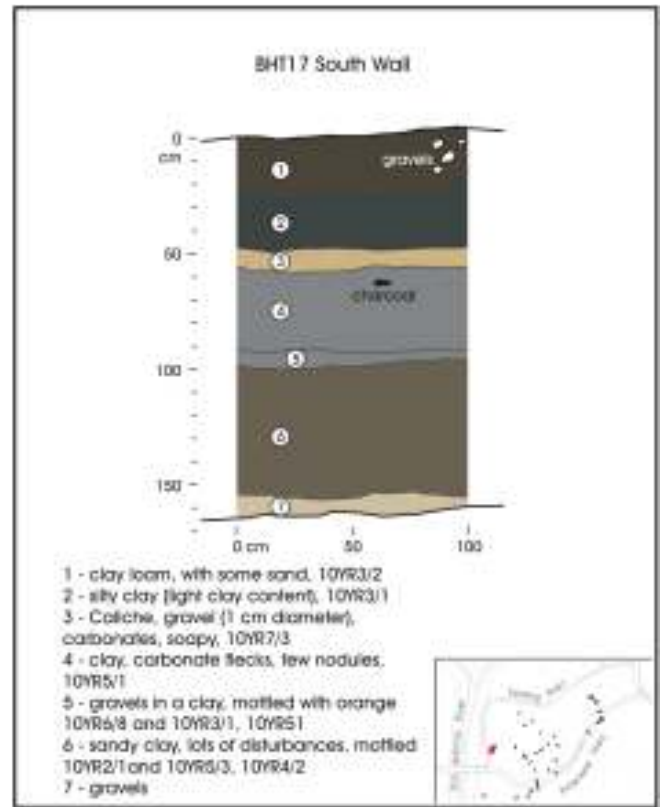


Figure 5-14. Profile of the south wall of BHT 17.

Table 5-2. Artifacts Recovered from Shovel Tests Within the Area to be Effected by the Mission Concepción Portal

Provenience	Organics		Lithics		Glass							Building Material				Metal		Plastics		Totals	
	bone	charcoal	burned rock	debitage	aqua	brown	clear	green	flat	olive green	brick	concrete	mortar	tile	other items	scrap	weed-eater cord	other	Total Count	Total weight (g)	
	ct	wt (g)	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct			
Shovel Test #12																					
3 (20-30 cmbs)			1							1										2	
Shovel Test #15																					
1 (0-10 cmbs)			1																	1	
3 (20-30 cmbs)										1										1	
4 (30-40 cmbs)							1	1												2	
Shovel Test #17																					
1 (0-10 cmbs)									1						9					10	
3 (20-30 cmbs)			1				1													2	
6 (50-60 cmbs)												2								2	
Shovel Test #19																					
1 (0-10)				1							1							2		4	
2 (10-20 cmbs)								1						1						2	
3 (20-30 cmbs)	1	11.9		1		2	12	18						23	7	1			65	11.9	
4 (30-40 cmbs)	1	2.4	1	1		1	1	3			1			1	6				16	2.4	
5 (40-50 cmbs)	1	0.3				4	7	6						6	2				26	0.3	
6 (50-60 cmbs)								3												3	
Grand Total	3	14.6	3	3	1	7	20	32	1	2	1	1	1	39	15	1	2		136	14.6	



## Concepción Park

Seventy-seven shovel tests were excavated within the confines of Concepción Park and the area to be included in the new walking trail north of the realigned Theo Avenue (Figure 5-1). Shovel tests were placed in areas that appeared to be the least disturbed based on compiled historical information. The main portion of the park, which includes the area within the bend of the old San Antonio River channel and the baseball fields, appears to have considerable amounts of disturbance due to the development of the park and installation of utility lines and water lines. Maps created by Rialto Studio Inc., (Figure 5-13) revealed extensive fill and subsurface disturbances within Concepción Park.

In addition to the shovel tests, a total of 28 backhoe trenches were excavated to determine if deeply buried cultural deposits existed. Many of the backhoe trenches were excavated within the baseball field in hopes of finding evidence of the Battle of Concepción and an acequia that would have followed the base of the ancient river terrace and would have emptied in the meander of the San Antonio River prior to channelization. The backhoe trenches excavated in the northeastern portion of the project area were placed in hopes of finding portions of the St PJ's Main Ditch and Lateral that were depicted on the 1914 map of the area (Figure 2-3b) and signs of which were noted in BHT 21. The following section discusses these units excavated within Concepción Park separated into three areas: units excavated inside of the old San Antonio River meander, units dug north of this meander, and units located in the northeastern portion of the APE.

### Units Excavated Inside the San Antonio River Meander

Sixteen shovel tests were excavated within the interior of the old San Antonio River bend. This portion of the park is highly developed with an asphalt loop, parking spaces, playground, basketball court, and picnic areas. The area along the old channel of the river near the tree line appears to be the least disturbed, though the shovel tests excavated here produced only modern trash (Table 5-3). The common materials recovered in the shovel tests were brown and clear glass fragments, pull tabs, plastic fragments, and metal fragments.

Four backhoe trenches were excavated along the old bank of the San Antonio River. BHT 1 was located in the southwestern-most portion of the project area, along what was the north bank of the river (Figure 5-1). The trench was approximately 4 meters long and 1.5 meters deep. Excavation revealed eight different soil layers that may be a result of flooding episodes

and the filling of the channel in the 1960s (Figure 5-15). The upper portion of the trench contained modern trash including glass and metal fragments. A large, unidentified metal object was noted at the base of the trench.

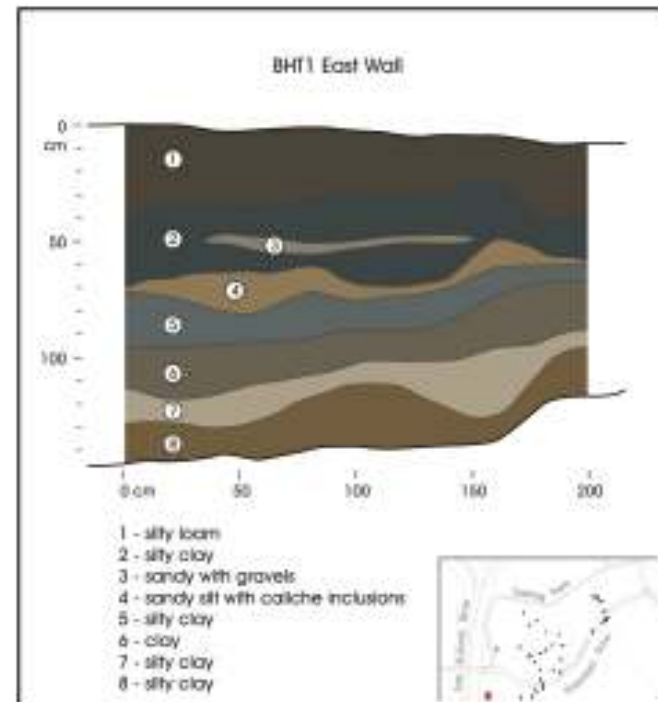


Figure 5-15. Profile of the east wall of BHT 1.

BHT 2 was excavated just to the south of the proposed road, along the old river channel (Figure 5-1). The trench was excavated to examine the old river bank, and determine if any evidence of the Battle of Concepción might be present. The soils of the BHT consisted of sandy clay that changed clay content in different levels (Figure 5-16).

The soils at the bottom of the trench were very sandy with mottles of orange and charcoal flecking. Coarser sandy clay was present above this, with a lighter soil lens on top. A layer of coarse gravels approximately 1 cm in diameter appears to have separated the upper sandy clay soils with higher clay content from the lower soils with higher sand content. Overall, the profile revealed seven layers that appear to indicate the amount of fill that was placed in this area during the filling of the channel (Figure 5-16). The backhoe trench did not reveal the slope of the original channel. A water line was encountered in the northern end of the trench, approximately 25 cm below the surface.

BHT 3 was excavated in the southeastern portion of the project area (Figure 5-1). This trench was also placed on

Table 5-3. Artifacts Recovered from Shovel Tests at Concepción Park within the Bend of the Old River Channel

Provenience	Organics		Lithics		Ceramics	Glass					Building Material				Metal					Mussel Shell		Other				Totals						
	bone	charcoal	burned rock	debitage		White Earthenware	aqua	brown	clear	gray	green	asphalt	limestone	mortar	plaster	aluminum bottle top	bottle cap	can	foil	other items	pull tab	scrap	wire nail			crayon	glass marble	plastic jewelry applique	plastics	Total Count	Total weight (g)	
	ct	wt (g)	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	wt (g)	ct	ct	ct	ct				
ST # 58																																
0-10 cm	1	0.1														1				1						2				5	0.1	
20-30 cm							1				1																			3		
30-40 cm	1	0.6																												1	0.6	
ST # 59																																
0-10 cm			1					1	1											1				1	0.3					5	0.3	
ST # 60																																
0-10 cm										1			1																		2	
10-20 cm	1	0.3																													1	0.3
30-40 cm																					4	1									5	
40-50 cm			2																		2		1	2.8							5	2.8
50-60 cm									1																						1	
ST # 61																																
0-10 cm								1												1											2	
10-20 cm																				1											1	
20-30 cm																	1														1	
40-50 cm																															1	1
ST # 62																																
0-10 cm	1	0.1						50			1				1	1			1											1	56	0.1
10-20 cm								6	1			1								1											9	
20-30 cm								4																							4	
30-40 cm								5	1						1	1															8	
40-50 cm								2																						1	3	
ST # 63																																
0-10 cm						1	1	1	3							1				1	1									6	15	
ST # 88																																
0-10 cm									3																						1	4
ST #08																																
0-10 cm						1		2				2																		2	7	
10-20 cm								3											1												4	
50-60 cm				1																5											6	
ST #10																																
0-10 cm																3					2											
10-20 cm	1	1.6			2																										3	1.6
ST #11																																
0-10 cm								1	1											1								1	2	6		
20-30 cm				1																											1	
50-60 cm																								1	1.8						1	1.8
ST #41																																
0-10 cm																																
Total	5	2.7	3	2	2	1	2	72	16	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	7	1	1	12	8	8	1	3	4.9	2	1	1	14	172	7.6	

the old bank of the river. The trench was approximately 4 meters in length and 1.5 meters in depth. The soils of BHT 3 appeared to be fairly uniform, though the changes in the soil indicate that there is some disturbance (Figure 5-17). A water line was encountered at the north end of the trench that also reveals the level of disturbance in the area. Cultural material consisted of modern trash, building materials such as brick and mortar, a penny, and mussel shell.

BHT 18 was located to the west of BHT 3 (Figure 5-1). The trench was placed further into the old river channel. The trench was approximately 4 meters in length and reached a

maximum depth of 1.5 meters. The excavation revealed the outline of the old bank, and showed the distinct difference in soil between the bank and the deposits that filled the old channel (Figure 5-18). Material encountered in the trench consisted of brown glass, a few metal fragments, and lumber fragments. None was collected.

### Units Excavated North of the Meander

The area on the north side of the old river channel was subjected to intensive shovel testing and backhoe trenching to search for battle-related artifacts, deeply buried prehistoric deposits and document the depositional history of the area



Figure 5-16. East wall of BHT 2.



Figure 5-17. East wall of BHT 3.

(Figure 5-1). A total of 41 shovel tests were excavated within the baseball field area (Table 5-4).

In addition to the shovel tests, a total of 16 backhoe trenches were excavated. The backhoe trenches were excavated to document the stratigraphy in the area, search for buried prehistoric cultural materials, and to potentially locate the channel of the Concepción Acequia desagüe that may have followed the base of the ancient terrace of the San Antonio River (Figure 2-3a). Backhoe trenches 6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 15, and 16 were excavated throughout the baseball fields to document the stratigraphy and search for prehistoric materials. Each BHT was approximately 3 to 4 meters in length and 1.5 meters in depth. Though situated meters from each other, BHT 6 and BHT 7 revealed decidedly different stratigraphic profiles (Figures 5-19 and 5-20).

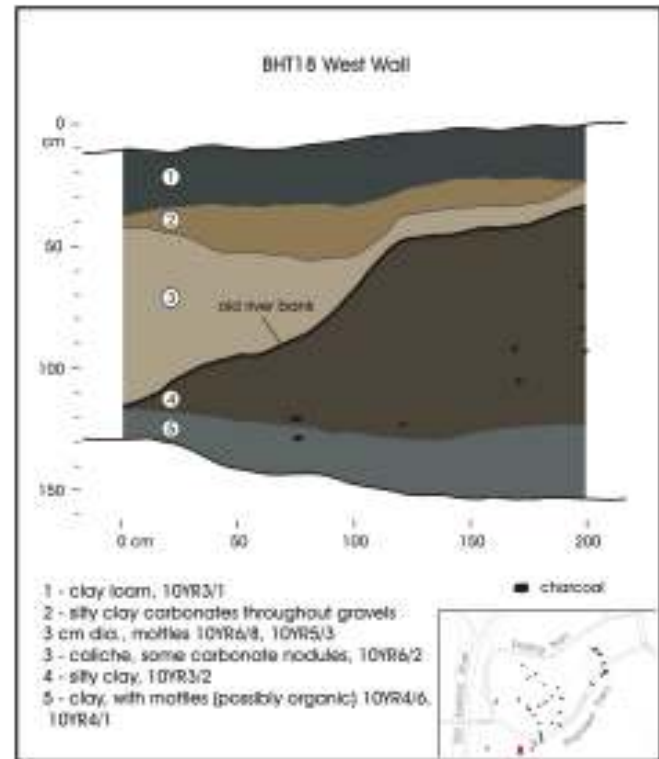


Figure 5-18. Profile of the west wall of BHT 18 showing the slope of the old river channel.

BHT 6 consisted of silty loam, silty clay, and clay matrixes. Metal fragments were noted in the back dirt, including a cut nail, and highly rusted ferrous fragments. The deposits in BHT 8, on the other hand, consisted of silty loam top soil, underlain by a massive zone of gravels (Figure 5-21).

Modern trash was noted in the upper level of BHTs 7 and 8 and contained pull tabs, plastic, and glass fragments. The back dirt was examined with a metal detector to determine if any significant historic metal objects were present. No material was collected from BHTs 7 and 8.

BHTs 11, 14, 15, and 16 were excavated in the northern portion of the baseball fields (Figure 5-1). They were positioned in the area to determine the extent of the disturbance around the baseball field. BHT 11, 14 and 16 had similar soil profiles, with slight differences in the clay content and density of gravels (Figure 5-22 and 5-23).

The back dirt of several of the BHTs was examined with a metal detector in hopes of recovering metal artifacts related to the Battle of Concepción. Three cut nails were identified within the back dirt in addition to two fragments of shaped metal (Figure 5-24). While two of the nails (Figure 5-24-

Table 5-4. Artifacts Recovered from Shovel Tests in the Vicinity of the Baseball Fields

Provenience	Organics		Lithics		Glass			Building Material	Metal						Other				Plastics			Totals				
	bone	charcoal	burned rock	debitage	brown	clear	purple	tile	bottle cap	cut nail	foil	other items	pull tab	scrap	unidentified nail	wire nail	coal	styrofoam	wooden dowel	1/2 dollar	fragment	cap	unidentified plastic	Total Count	Total weight (g)	
	ct	wt (g)	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct			
ST # 13																										
0-10 cm							1				2		1											4		
ST # 14																										
0-10 cm								1																1		
ST # 20																										
10-20 cm																			1					1		
ST # 45																										
0-10 cm											1							1						2		
ST # 46																										
0-10 cm	1	0.2																						1	0.2	
20-30 cm	1	0.2					1										1							3	0.2	
ST # 51																										
0-10 cm	1	0.9			2																			3	0.9	
30-40 cm					1																			1		
ST # 52																										
0-10 cm						3	2																	5		
10-20 cm					83	2					1		1				2			1				90		
20-30 cm	1	0.5									1		1											3	0.5	
ST # 55																										
10-20 cm					1																			1		
40-50 cm					3																			3		
50-60 cm					5																			5		
ST # 56																										
20-30 cm	1	0.3																						1	0.3	
40-50 cm	1	1.1																						1	1.1	
ST # 78																										
0-10 cm							1																	1		
10-20 cm					1	1	7					2									3			14		
20-30 cm	1	0.7					2							1										4	0.7	
30-40 cm							1							7		1								9		
ST # 81																										
0-10 cm																					1			1		
ST # 90																										
0-10 cm					3	1	1		1															1	7	
50-60 cm	1	17.6	1		1					1					1									4	17.6	
ST # 91																										
0-10 cm					1	1						1												4		
10-20 cm					1																			1		
Total	8	21.5	1	8	5	93	18	2	1	1	1	2	3	5	9	1	1	1	2	1	1	5	1	5	175	21.5

b-c) are typical cut nails, the smaller specimen (Figure 5-24d), may be a horseshoe nail. Unfortunately, heavy rust may have artificially reduced its size making it appear smaller than it may have originally been. The two metal fragments appear to have been shaped (i.e., a partial hole in one and angled cuts in the other) although the fragments are too small for identification.

In addition, the metal detecting efforts also resulted in the recovery of a religious medal shallowly buried between

BHTs 10 and 7. The medal is referred to as the “Miraculous Medal” or the “Medal of the Immaculate Concepción”. On one side of the medal is the image of the Virgin Mary with the date 1832. On the back side of the medal are a cross and the letter “M” intertwined, surrounded by stars and two hearts. According to the Catholic Church, the design of the medal was given to Catherine Labouré, of Paris, in a series of visions she had of the Virgin Mary in 1830. The first of the medals were struck with the church’s approval in 1832, and distributed throughout France. These medals are still



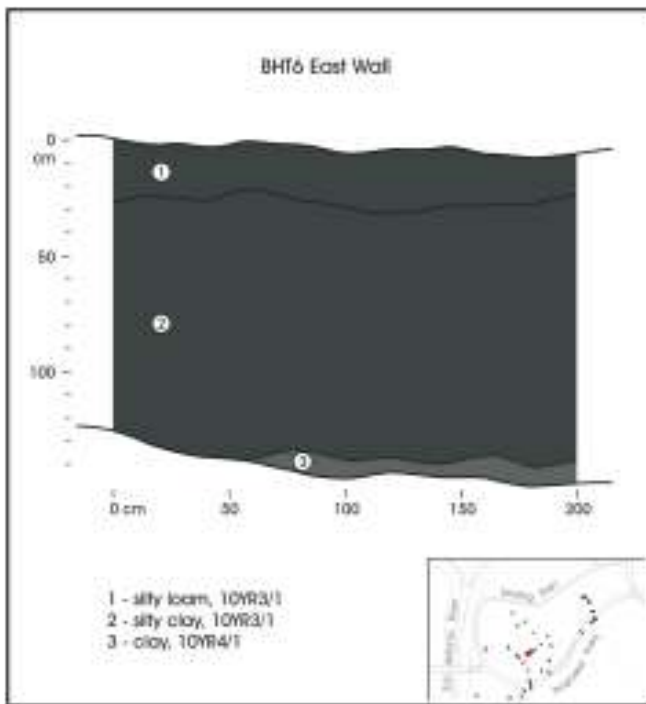


Figure 5-19. Profile of the east wall of BHT 6.



Figure 5-21. Gravels in BHT 8.

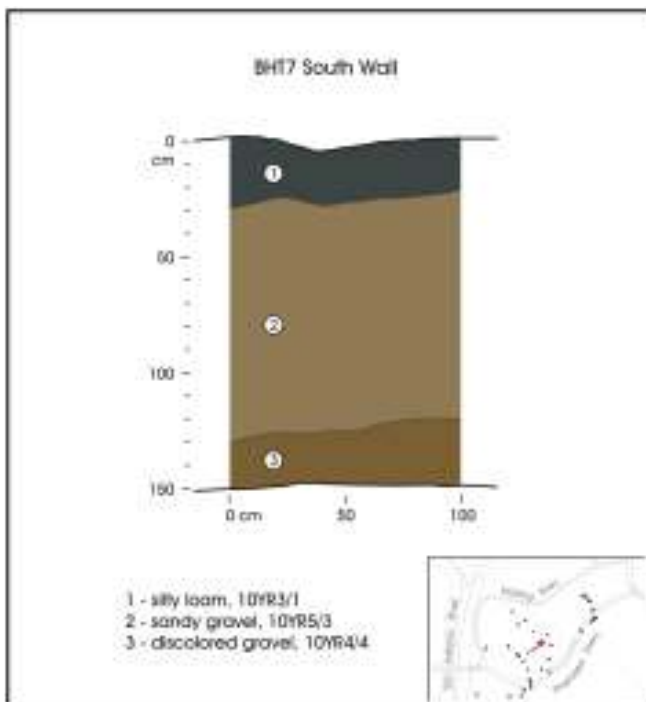


Figure 5-20. Profile of the south wall of BHT 7.

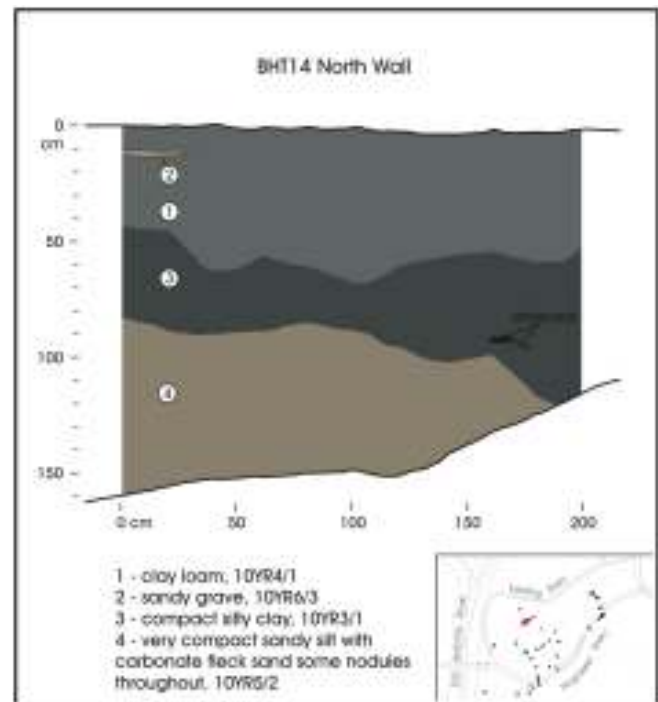


Figure 5-22. Profile of the north wall of BHT 14.

manufactured to this day and each is stamped with the 1832 date. This medal was made of a light, white metal, likely aluminum. Though the specimen that was recovered within the APE showed wear and aging, we cannot assume that this particular artifact is temporally diagnostic of the early 19th

century. Modern versions are made of gold, silver, pewter and stainless steel.

A hand painted white earthenware ceramic sherd was also collected in this area near BHTs 8 through 10, though at an earlier date of the project. City Archaeologist, Kay Hinds brought the piece to the attention of CAR archaeologists. The hand painted sherd is typical of the wares that were found in the area during the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. Hand painted wares were in manufacture prior to the 1830s, though the importation of such goods was

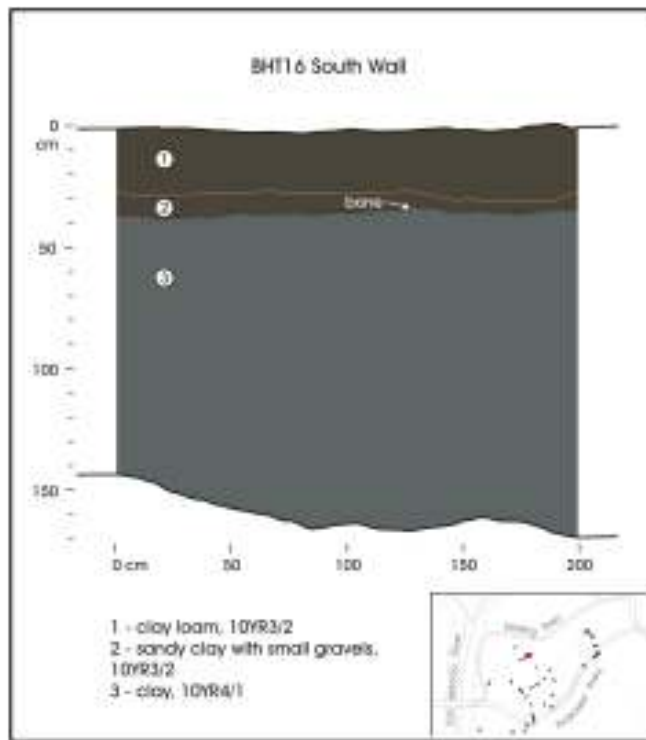


Figure 5-23. Profile of the south wall of BHT 16.

not as common until after the railroads were established in San Antonio in 1877.

BHT 15 had a decidedly different stratigraphy in comparison to BHTs 11, 14, and 16 (Figure 5-25). This trench revealed heavy disturbance, with organic stains and soils that were not found in other areas. BHT 15 contained a pocket of sand that was outlined in a silty loam humus. The trench was located closest to the parking area off Theo Avenue and the swimming pool. These disturbances may be related to modifications in the area, or landscaping activities. No cultural material was collected from the trench, although all that was noted was modern trash in the upper levels.

BHT 9, 10, 13, and 19 were located along what appeared to be a drainage ditch that follows the base of the ancient terrace of the San Antonio River. Historic maps suggest that the slight dip that is at the base of the terrace may have been the Concepción Acequia desague (Figure 2-3a). Therefore, it was critical to relocate this Spanish Colonial irrigation feature, if indeed our interpretations of the historic maps were correct. The four backhoe trenches revealed similar stratigraphic profiles. The soil consisted of black, sticky, clay that began just beneath the grasses (BHT 9; Figure 5-26).



Figure 5-24. Artifacts recovered using metal detectors: a) religious medal b-c) cut nail; d) unidentified nail; e) shaped metal pieces.

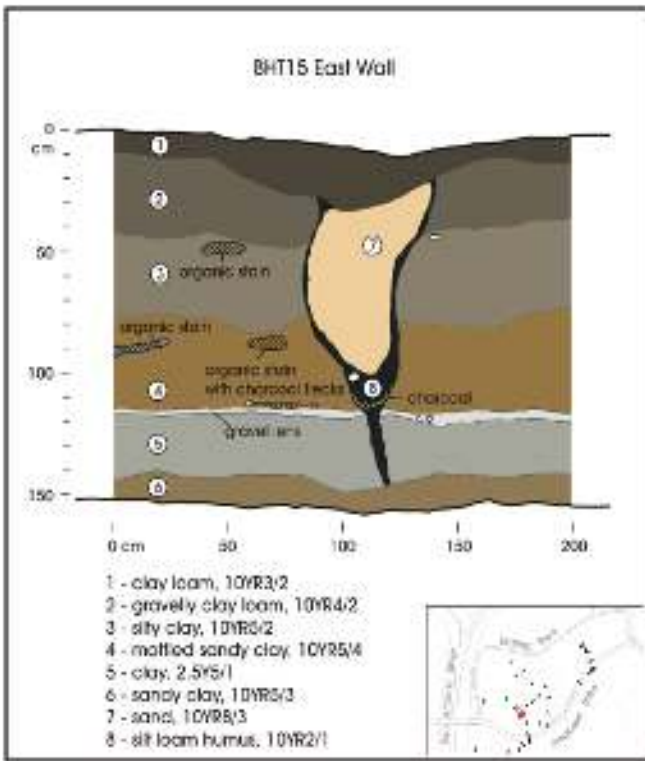


Figure 5-25. Profile of the east wall of BHT 15.

The matrix remained uniform to the base of each trench at roughly 1.5 meters below surface. Cultural material was noted in the upper portion of the trenches, just beneath the grasses. BHT 10 was excavated on the western bank of this drainage feature that follows the ancient terrace, while the other trenches were on its eastern bank. No evidence of a desague trench was noted in BHT 10. BHT 19 was excavated furthest into the east bank and the ancient terrace slope in hopes of finding evidence of a desague trench. Though the trench was excavated well into the slope (Figure 5-27), no evidence was found of an outline of the desague. The other two backhoe trenches, BHT 9 and 13, also did not reveal evidence of a desague trench.

BHTs 4, 5, 12, and 26 were excavated along the northern portion of the old meander of the San Antonio River. These trenches were excavated in efforts to determine if intact prehistoric cultural deposits may be present within the bank of the old meander. In addition, we hoped to

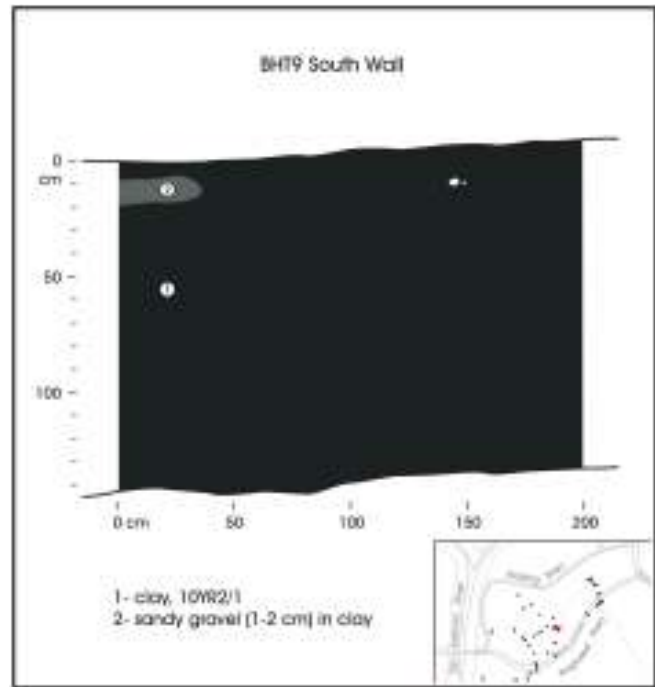


Figure 5-26. Profile of the south wall of BHT 9. Soils of this trench are similar to BHTs 10, 13, and 19.

locate the remnants of a stone wall that appears on a 1933 CCC map (Figure 5-5) of this portion of the river. The rock wall is also shown on a 1939 Tobin aerial of the park. BHTs 4 and 5 did not encounter any evidence of the stone wall depicted on the aerial and map. Subsequently, BHT 26 was



Figure 5-27. BHT 19, facing east.



excavated between these trenches in hopes of encountering and cross-sectioning the wall. BHT 26 also found no evidence of a stone wall, but the profile of BHT 26 revealed the slope of the old river channel (Figure 5-28). BHTs 4, 5, 12, and 26 produced no significant cultural remains, and much of what was encountered was modern trash.

BHT 31 (Figure 5-1) was excavated at the edge of what was thought to be a foot bridge also shown on the historic map (Figure 5-5) and the Tobin aerial photo. The trench was approximately 3 meters in length and 1.5 meters in depth. No evidence of the foot bridge was uncovered in the trench. The soils appeared to pretty uniform throughout the trench. Cultural material encountered consisted of modern trash (glass fragments and pull tabs).

**Units Excavated in the NE Portion of the APE**

A total of twenty shovel tests and eight backhoe trenches were excavated in the northeastern portion of the project area. The shovel tests were placed at approximately 30 meter intervals to determine the potential for buried cultural remains in the area to be affected by the construction of the mini-walking trail north of the realigned Theo Avenue. A large portion of this area is occupied by the Zachry trailers and work yard, and could not be investigated during the course of the project. Few artifacts were recovered in the shovel tests excavated in this area. The small number of artifacts included glass fragments, ceramic fragments, and a toy gun plate (Table 5-5).

Soils in the shovel tests varied throughout the northeastern portion of the project area. The shovel tests located nearest the old CYO baseball field had disturbed upper levels due to the run-off of sand from the field. The remainder of the shovel tests had a silty clay loam top layer which changed to caliche below. In some cases the top layer ran the extent of the shovel test.

It was hoped that the eight backhoe trenches excavated in the northeastern portion of the project area would finding evidence of the St. PJ's Main Ditch and lateral. Based on historic maps these irrigation features appeared to be located within the proposed easement of the realigned Theo Avenue. BHT 21, excavated within the proposed easement, was the first to encounter the cross-section of a ditch feature. Initial impressions based on the size of the feature suggested that it may be part of the Main Ditch.

BHTs 24 and 25 were initially individual trenches that were eventually joined. They were excavated in search of what was assumed to be the lateral off the main ditch (see

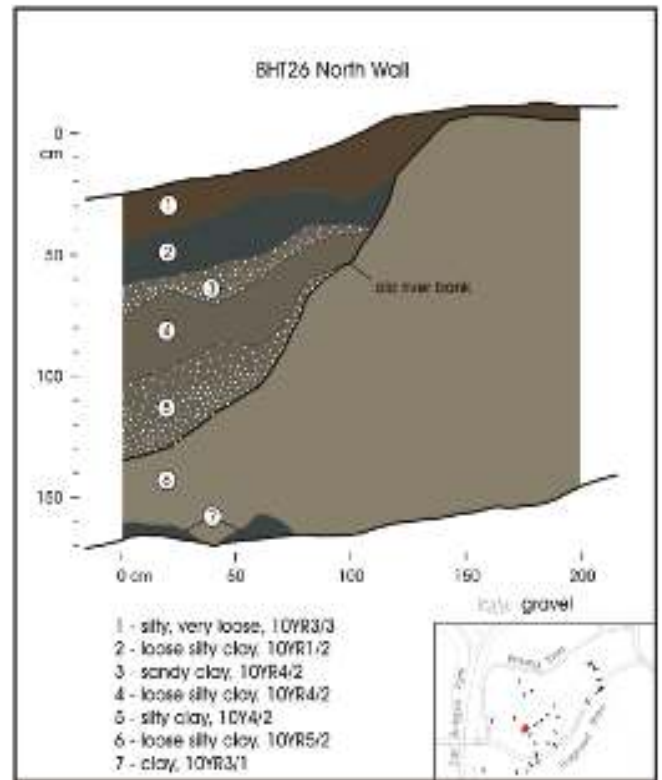


Figure 5-28. Profile of the north wall of BHT 26.

Figure 2-3b). Figure 5-1 shows the presumed location of the lateral, the dotted line running southwest from the Main Ditch. This alignment of the lateral was derived from the 1914 historic map of the St. PJ's property (Figure 2-3b and 5-3). However, to our surprise, neither BHTs 24 and 25 nor BHT 27, excavated further to the west, encountered evidence

Table 5-5. Artifacts Recovered from the Shovel Tests Excavated in the Northeastern Portion of the APE

Province	Organics		Ceramics			Glass			Metal	Other	Totals			
	ct	wt (g)	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct	ct					
			bone	porcelain	Rockingham Stoneware	Undecorated Earthenware	Yellowware Stoneware	brown	clear	milk	wire nail	toy gun cover plate	Total Count	Total weight (g)
Shovel Test # 104														
2 (10-20 cmbs)											1		1	
Shovel Test # 106														
1 (0-10 cmbs)				1	1								2	
Shovel Test # 107														
1 (0-10 cmbs)	1	0.3										1	2	0.3
Shovel Test # 108														
1 (0-10 cmbs)				2	1								3	
Shovel Test # 112														
1 (0-10 cmbs)								4	1				5	
Shovel Test # 114														
2 (10-20 cmbs)							1						1	
Grand Total	1	0.3	1	2	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	14	0.3



of the presumed lateral. The soils observed in BHTs 24, 25 and 27 were rather similar (Figure 5-29). That is, the top soil consisted of 30-50 cm of clay loam followed by caliche to the bottom of the exposed stratigraphy. No cultural material was noted during the excavation or in the back dirt.



Figure 5-29. Profiling of BHT 27 showing distinct change between upper dark soils and caliche.

Finally, assuming that perhaps the feature discovered in BHT 21 was not the Main Ditch, we excavated two east-west oriented trenches, BHTs 28 and 29, across the presumed and historically mapped (Figure 2-3b) path of the Main Ditch. However, neither trench encounter evidence of the main ditch. No outline of a trench was noted in the profiles, and the layer of silty clay loam was thinner than that encountered in BHTs 24, 25, and BHT 27. No significant cultural material was encountered in either trench.

### Ground Penetrating Radar Survey

In continuation of the efforts to locate the Main Ditch or lateral, a couple of days prior to the completion of this draft, a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey of the area near BHT 21 was carried out in hopes of establishing the location of the Main Ditch. The survey was conducted along several 10-meter

transects laid out immediately north of BHT 21 where the Ditch was originally identified in profile. This location was to provide a baseline for “calibrating” the instrument to what the feature looked like through the “eye” of the GPR. As adjoining transects were run, several anomalies were noted that made it difficult to define the orientation of the ditch. To help clarify the confusion, a four meter trench, BHT 34, was excavated to the north of BHT 21. This trench, positioned in the proposed ROW and only 8 meters north of BHT 21, revealed no evidence of the ditch. This created even more confusion regarding the feature’s location.

In search of answers, the CAR project archaeologist reopened BHT 21 to reexamine the previously discovered profile. The north and south wall profiles of BHT 21 revealed that the feature was oriented toward the east-northeast and at a much steeper angle than originally suspected. With this observation in hand, BHT 34 was extended further to the east where it cross-sectioned the feature revealing that the feature may be turning to the east rather than following a northerly direction.

Since the path of the ditch appeared to be turning into property currently owned by St. PJ’s, the GPR survey efforts were reoriented on locating the path of the feature to the south of BHT 21. The area was cleared and 10-meter transects were set up. Knowing that the feature was trending to the east-northeast, the transects were set up in an east-west direction, but were no longer placed on a grid. Though a portion of BHTs 21, 34-36 fell outside of the project boundary, all backhoe trenches excavated in this area touched or crossed into the ROW of the proposed route of Theo Avenue.

BHT 35 was excavated after the GPR noted an anomaly that was believed to be the ditch. Excavation of the trench found that the GPR reading was off by at least a meter, but evidence of the ditch was present in the north and south wall profiles. Similar to the previous excavated trenches that had evidence of the ditch, there was no associated cultural material. The ditch was cut into the caliche base (Figure 5-30).

Located further to the south (approximately 4 meters), BHT 36 was excavated after the GPR positively identified the ditch (Figure 5-31). Excavation of the trench revealed that the ditch was wider in this area (Figure 5-32) than in the other trenches where it was documented. A few animal bone fragments were observed in the back dirt and in the upper layers of soil in the ditch. Typically, the feature had been dug from the clay loam surface into the caliche to a depth of 80-90 cmbs. One edge of the feature tended to be rather vertical while the other had a more gradually sloping profile. The bottom of the feature tended to be rather flat.

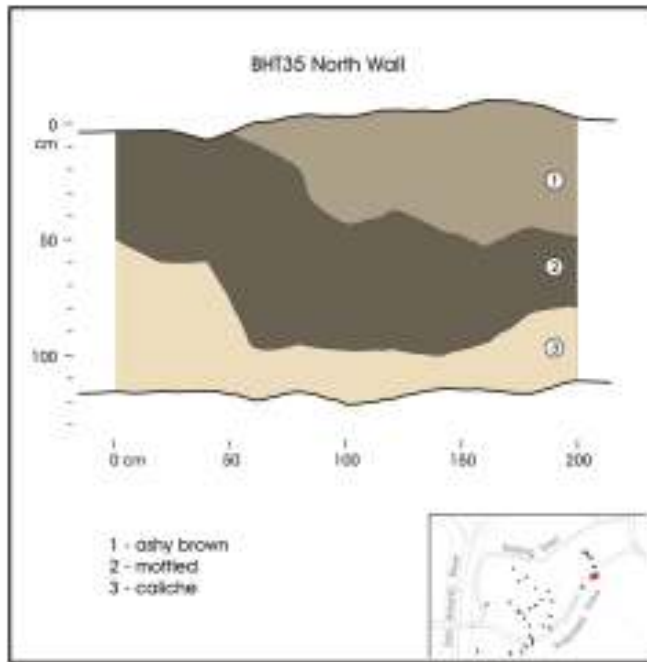


Figure 5-30. Profile of the north wall of BHT 35.

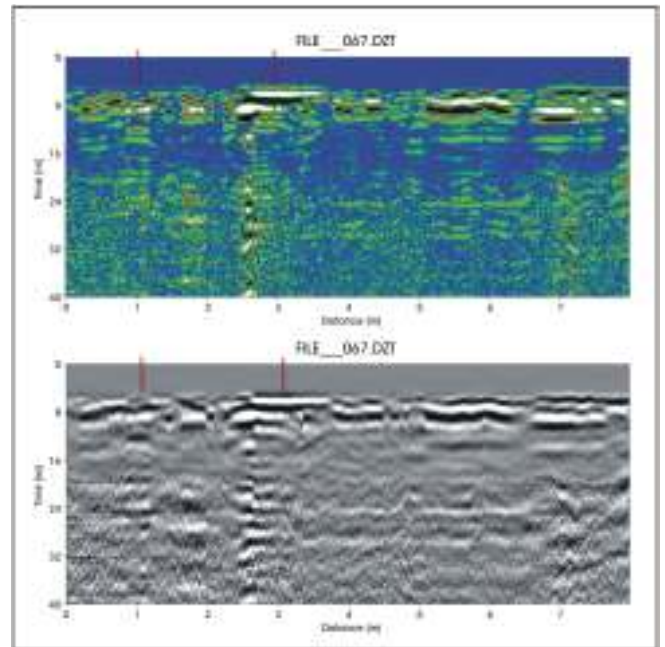


Figure 5-31. Ground Penetrating Radar images of acequia lateral as shown between the red marks.



Figure 5-32. South wall of BHT 36 showing outline of acequia lateral.





## **Chapter 6: Discussion and Recommendations**

### **Theo Avenue Realignment**

The archaeological investigations conducted along the route of the proposed Theo Avenue realignment identified two significant features. The first of these was initially identified in Backhoe Trench 21 and subsequently in BHTs 34, 35, and 36, in the northeastern portion of Concepción Park. Though the entirety of each trench does not fall within the current project boundary, each trench crosses into the ROW of the proposed route of Theo Avenue. The feature is the buried remnant of an irrigation ditch. Considering the orientation of the feature and the fact that it matches well the orientation of the lateral shown on historic maps of the St. P.J.'s property, we conclude that the feature represents the lateral associated with the Main Ditch employed by the orphanage to irrigate its fields during the early 1900s. If we are correct in this assumption, it is likely that the Main Ditch, is located somewhere to the east of the location of BHT 21. The location of the Main Ditch has not been identified but it appears that it runs along the N-S trending fence-line separating the St. P.J.'s property from Concepción Park. Furthermore, it is possible that the juncture between the Main Ditch and the lateral falls within the ROW for the proposed Theo Avenue.

The second significant historic feature was discovered during the excavation of BHT 23. This trench was located on the east bank of the old river channel within Concepción Park. A portion of a well-built stone wall was uncovered in the trench. The wall is approximately 5-feet high and 12-inches in thickness. It is built of quarried limestone and the stones are held together with cement mortar. The wall has numerous curves in it that follow the route of the old meander of the San Antonio River. To determine the length of the wall, the length of the trench was increased over the course of three days. The southern portion of the wall curled into the bank and appears to end well inside the bank of the San Antonio River meander. This portion of the wall appears to be in the vicinity of the remains of a pump house that was recorded during a previous survey of the St. P.J.'s tract. An additional trench was placed perpendicular to the bank (BHT 33) approximately 8 meters to the south of the end of the stone wall. The additional trench was excavated in hopes of finding a second wall that would perhaps line an inlet to the pump house that is located directly up-hill and east of this spot. A second portion of the wall was not found and therefore we could not confirm the hypothesis that the terminal curve in the stone wall was associated with the pump house.

Given that CCC camps were established in Texas by 1933, we anticipate that the wall was constructed during the 1930s by

CCC members active in the area. Accounts of funding approval for the roof repair and re-plastering of Mission Concepción suggest that the CCC was actively working in the area (National Parks Conservation Association 2008). In addition, the pocket knife that was retrieved from the initial excavation of BHT 23 contained an inscription that resembles the CCC company designations. Our research to date did not uncover specific documents related to the CCC projects in the area. Confusion as to the location of the documents that deal with San Antonio CCC-era projects has made it difficult to track down specific details to date. As of this point, all that can be confidently stated is that the stone wall consists of cut stone held together with a grey to yellowish mortar and the top of the wall is capped with cement. The style of the wall is similar to that of the river walls along Brackenridge Park, and the construction style is similar to that of the Espada wall reconstruction that is known to have been restored with CCC labor but in the early 1950s. Therefore, it is likely that the wall found at Concepción Park was constructed by the CCC sometime during the 1930s.

### **Mission Concepción Portal**

Investigations conducted at the proposed location of the Mission Concepción Portal revealed that the area is highly disturbed. Maps created by Rialto Studio Inc., show that a large amount of fill was placed in the old river channel in the vicinity of the proposed portal. In addition, numerous water and utility lines cross the area as well. Shovel tests produced cultural material, though much of it is in disturbed context and consisted of modern trash. BHT 17, which was excavated on the west bank of the old channel of the San Antonio River, produced no evidence of intact cultural deposits.

### **Concepción Park**

Shovel tests and backhoe trenching of the area currently designated as Concepción Park did not produce any significant intact cultural deposits. The shovel tests were spaced throughout the area in an effort to test locations that were not disturbed by the installation of water and utility lines as noted on the Rialto Studio Inc., disturbance maps. Much of the material encountered consisted of modern debris. A few items of interest were encountered, but none were related to the Battle of Concepción, or the Spanish Colonial occupation of the area.

The series of backhoe trenches were distributed throughout Concepción Park in order to collect information on the levels



of disturbance within the park, search for deeply buried prehistoric cultural deposits, document the Concepción Acequia desague that may have followed the base of the ancient terrace of the San Antonio River, and document the extent of the stone walls lining the old meander of the San Antonio River.

The stone wall discovered within the Theo Avenue realignment easement (BHT 23) continues to the north and appeared to follow the path of the old river channel outside of the realignment ROW. This portion of the wall contained several curves and bends. At one point, what appeared to be a cement culvert was uncovered that would have allowed water to drain into the old river channel from the shallow drainage channel that ran along the base of the ancient San Antonio River terrace. The location of the culvert appears to support the possibility that the desague of the Concepción Acequia wrapped around the current baseball fields and ran along the bottom of the terrace before emptying into the old meander of the river. Unfortunately, four backhoe trenches excavated along this shallow drainage did not reveal any clear evidence of a desague channel.

Near BHT 31, the rock in the stone wall appears to have been highly disturbed. It cannot be determined whether the damage to the rock wall dates to the channelization of the river or subsequent filling of the old meander. Remnants of the stone wall were found further to the northwest, but nothing in the trenches indicated that the wall was still intact. It is not known whether the east bank of the river was lined along the entire length of the bend within Concepción Park.

In addition to the stone wall noted in BHT 23, similar stone walls are scattered throughout the Park in at least three landscaping beds along the southern margin of Theo Avenue in the vicinity of the swimming pool. Only the upper portions of these walls are visible but the construction technique appears to be similar to that noted in the BHT 23 wall. These features are under no threat of destruction.

BHTs excavated along the old river channel offered not only a view of the old river bank, but also of the fill that was used during channelization. BHT 18 offered the best view of both, and revealed the amount of modern trash that was in the old river channel. Material encountered consisted of modern glass and metal fragments that were not collected. Other BHTs along the bank revealed alluvial deposits derived from frequent flooding along the old meander of the river.

The BHTs excavated within the baseball field revealed significant levels of disturbance as well as portions of

an ancient channel of the San Antonio River that flowed against a high terrace bordering the eastern edge of Concepción Park. The soil stratigraphy is not uniform throughout the field. A loamy top soil overlies massive gravel deposits near BHTs 7 and 8. The top soil in this area appears to have been laid down to create a playing field. Backhoe trenches located closer to the ancient channel of the River at the base of the terrace are dominated by black clay to a depth of 1.5 meters. These deposits are clearly the result of low energy overbank flooding or low energy deposition and filling of a shallow channel. It is unclear how these low energy deposits relate to the high energy massive gravel layers noted in trenches just to the west of this area and unfortunately no stratigraphic evidence was observed supporting the possibility that these clay deposits are found within the desague channel of the Concepción acequia.

## **Recommendations**

Definitive evidence of the Battle of Concepción was not located within the APE. Neither was evidence of the Concepción Acequia desague identified within the project area although historic maps suggest that it did cut through the APE. While it is possible that the desague is at the base of the ancient terrace of the San Antonio River bordering Concepción Park, no clear evidence of this was found. A small dip in the stone wall identified in the vicinity of where the desague may join the old meander of the River suggests that water flow was relatively regular along the base of the terrace. Whether this water flow was channeled by the natural dip in the landform or the natural dip itself resulted from a buried irrigation feature could not be established. To date, therefore, no definitive evidence of the Concepción desague was found by the project.

Nonetheless, at least two historic features encountered are of historic significance. First, the lateral to the St. PJ's Main Ditch uncovered in BHTs 21, 34, 35, and 36 offers an interesting look into the irrigation system utilized during the early 20th century. It is also possible that the Main Ditch itself, as well as the junction of the two features, is within the Theo realignment ROW. Second, the stone wall discovered in BHT 23 is an example of CCC-era architecture and the construction activities that were conducted along the San Antonio River during the 1930s.

Both features are located within the proposed route of the realigned Theo Avenue and will be impacted during the construction phase. Given that disturbances to these features cannot be avoided due to limited engineering design options, CAR recommends that the parties

involved in the project make every attempt to disseminate the cultural and historical significance of these features through interpretive signage, and public education by incorporating remnants of these features into the construction. In addition, great care should be taken to not impact portions of these features outside of the immediate realignment ROW. The THC, the City's Office of Historic Preservation and the parties involved in bringing this project to fruition should consult to determine the appropriate interpretive approaches warranted to raise awareness of the significance of these historic features.

Finally, although the APE was investigated at a level that well exceeded THC minimum standards, the potential for encountering intact buried cultural deposits or features, particularly in areas of deep impact (i.e., grading of slopes, augering for light pole installations) still exists. Therefore, CAR recommends that construction monitoring take place in these localized areas of projected deep impact. The THC reviewer concurred with these recommendations and during project meetings the representative of the Office of Historic Preservation reiterated the need for the incorporation of a portion of the CCC-era stone wall in interpretive designs associated with the project.



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