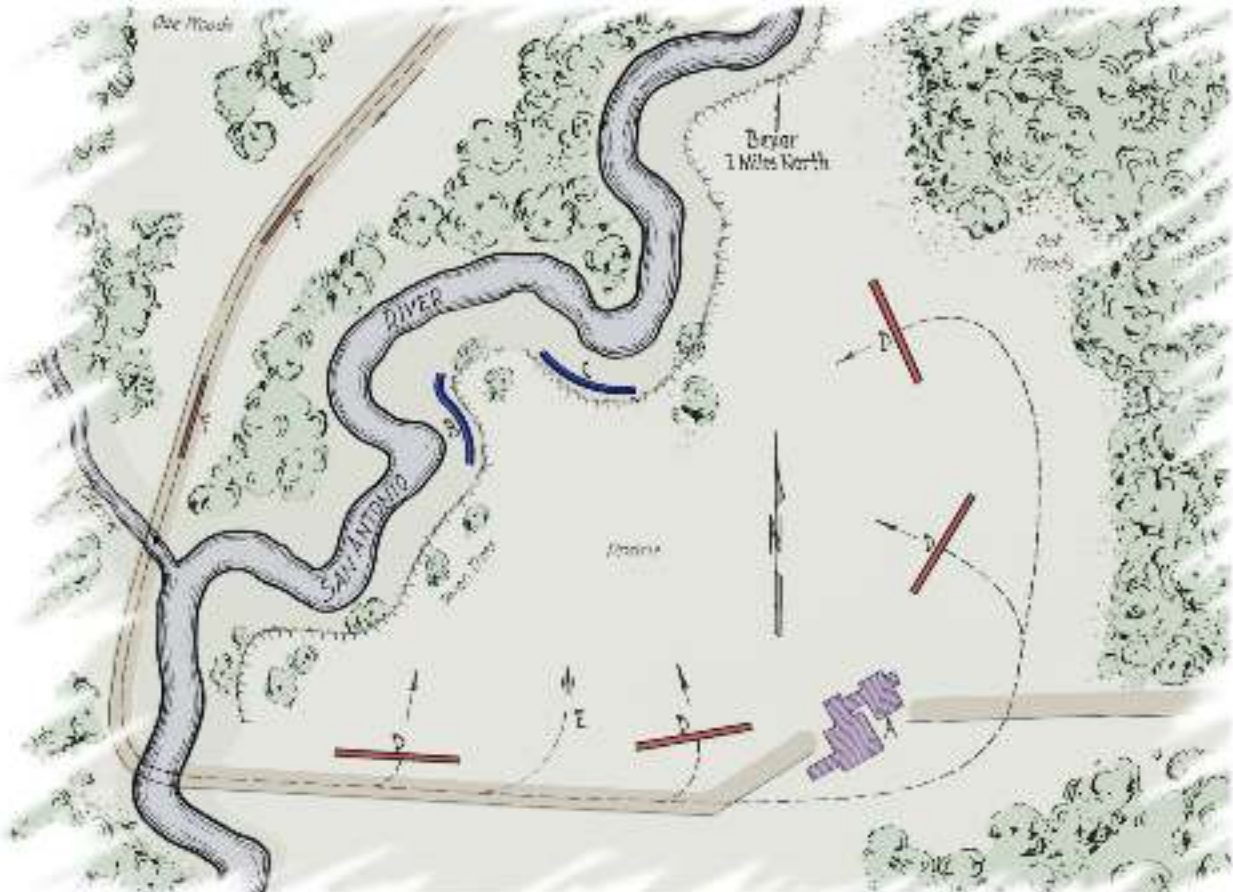


Backhoe Trenching in Selected Areas of the Bexar County Juvenile Detention Center, City of San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas



by
Barbara A. Meissner

Steve A. Tomka
Principal Investigator

Prepared for:
Bexar County Infrastructure Services
233 N. Pecos, Suite 420
San Antonio, Texas 78207



Prepared by:
Center for Archaeological Research
The University of Texas at San Antonio
Technical Report, No. 4

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Texas Antiquity Permit #4563

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Abstract:

At the recommendation of the Texas Historical Commission, four backhoe trenches were dug on the grounds of the Bexar County Juvenile Detention Center, near downtown San Antonio, Texas. The trenches were dug in advance of planned construction of new facilities and the demolition of two buildings, and were considered necessary due to recent research that indicated that the project area may be on the eastern edge of the battlefield of the Battle of Concepción, the first major skirmish of the Siege of Béxar.

Although most of the project area had already been disturbed by previous construction, four areas that appeared minimally disturbed were tested with backhoe trenches to determine if any remnants of the battle remained in these areas. Of the four backhoe trenches, two (BHT #2 and #4) proved to contain only modern fill, with no undisturbed sediments remaining. BHT #1 and BHT #3 had undisturbed sediments beneath layers of modern fill. However, no cultural materials of any kind were observed during the digging of the four trenches.

It is recommended that the construction for the new Juvenile Probation Center, renovations and expansion of the Juvenile Detention Center and demolition of the Rice Building and the structure at 233 E. Mitchell Street be permitted to continue as planned, as no adverse effect on important cultural deposits or features is anticipated.

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Even the smallest archaeological project cannot proceed without the assistance of many people, and this was especially true during this project. Thanks go first to Kay Hindes, of the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office, who realized that new research, not yet published, indicated that the Juvenile Detention Center campus might be located along the eastern portion of the ground where the Battle of Concepción was fought. Betty Bueché, Facilities Division Manager of the Bexar County Infrastructure Services worked with almost alarming speed when she realized that this project needed to be completed as quickly as possible, providing valuable support and helping to expedite the paperwork. Alfred Jimenez, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor at the Bexar County Juvenile Detention Center, as well as Hector Lynch and Reynaldo Lopez of his department, were extremely helpful and friendly and didn't seem to mind that we were digging up their carefully tended lawns.

Mike Lothian of CESA Contractors, Inc. helped with arranging for a backhoe and "Gator", also of CESA, did his usual excellent job as a backhoe operator.

The author was project archaeologist for this project, under the supervision of the Director of the Center for Archaeological Research, Steve A. Tomka, who served as the Principal Investigator. Sherri Suñaz and Patty Sanchez of the CAR office handled all the paperwork with their usual skill. Bruce Moses served as technical editor. Bruce and Leonard Kemp completed the maps and other figures needed for this report. In addition, Bruce helped put together the information that showed that the Battle of Concepción may have occurred north of the location that tradition had dictated.

To all the above I would like to express my thanks for all your help.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Project Background

This report describes archaeological work done on the grounds of the Bexar County Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) near downtown San Antonio, Texas (Figure 1-1), under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 4563. The project began in May 2007, when, as part of the planning for construction of new facilities associated with the JDC, Bexar County Infrastructure Services (BCIS) contacted the San Antonio Historic Preservation Office (SAHPO) to determine if there were any known historic or prehistoric sites within the grounds of the JDC that might be impacted by the new construction.

The proposed new construction, funded by a 2003 bond, would involve demolition of the Rice Building and the building at 233 E. Mitchell Street (Figure 1-1), the construction of a new Juvenile Probation Center, and renovation and expansion of the Juvenile Detention Center.

Though there were no known historic or prehistoric sites within the project area (THC 2007a), Kay Hinde of the SAHPO had recently reviewed a manuscript from the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR) of the University of Texas at San Antonio before its publication (Meissner et al. 2007). This manuscript described recent research that suggested that the Battle of Concepción, the first engagement of the Siege of Béxar (Barr 1990, 2001), had been fought, not in the area that had been traditionally considered the location (now Concepción Park see Figure 1-1), but in an area northwest of Mission Concepción. The Battle of Concepción was the first engagement of what became the Siege of Béxar, in which a volunteer army of Texans forced the Mexican Army out of San Antonio in December 1835 (Barr 2001). This action led to the famous Battle of the Alamo, in which the Mexican Army retook the town. Hinde noted that if the Battle of Concepción had taken place in the more northern location suggested by Meissner et al. (2007:16-18), the grounds of the JDC were within the eastern edge of the battleground. She recommended that BCSI contact the Texas Historic Commission (THC) to determine what were Bexar County's responsibilities in this situation.

As a result of discussions between BCSI Facilities Division Manager Betty Bueché, the SAHPO, and Mark Denton of THC, it was determined that because of the possibility that the grounds of the JDC are associated with the Battle of Concepción, some archaeological work was necessary to address the



Figure 1-1. Location of project area. Inset shows an aerial view of the project area, noting the location of Mission Concepción.

requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Antiquities Code of 1966, as amended, the implementing regulations of 36 CFR Part 800, and the Antiquities Code of Texas. Therefore BCSI contracted with CAR to excavate four backhoe trenches required by the THC in order to determine if any indications of the battle, or any other significant cultural deposits or features, could be found. The field work for this project took place on June 20-21, 2007.

The remainder of this chapter provides a description of the project area and a brief summary of previous archaeological research done in the project area and vicinity. Chapter 2 consists of a brief historic background for the project, with emphasis on Mission Concepción and the Battle of Concepción. Chapter 3 describes the methods used, the results of the backhoe trenching, a discussion of these results, and recommendations concerning the planned construction at the JDC.

Project Area Description

Climate and Soils

San Antonio, Texas, is located in the south-central portion of the state, in Bexar County, at the base of the Balcones Escarpment of the Edwards Plateau (Figure 1-1). Numerous small creeks cut through the Balcones Escarpment in Bexar County, forming the watershed of the San Antonio and Medina Rivers. Bexar County has a modified subtropical climate with cool winters and hot summers. Annual precipitation in the area is highly variable but averages 78.7 cm (30.98”) annually. The rainfall occurs in a bimodal pattern with peaks between May and June and September and October (Bomar 1995).

Soils in the area are from the Lewisville series, which are moderately deep, dark-colored, alluvial, silty clay soils that occur mainly on terraces bordering the major drainages in Bexar County (Taylor et al. 1991:25). The entire area, including the grounds of the JDC and Mission Concepción, is on the flood plain of the San Antonio River, and was described as “flat plain” in the past (McKeehan 2003).

River Rechannelization

The San Antonio River is located about 270 m (886’) west of the corner of Mitchell Street and Mission Road. This section of the river, from where San Pedro Creek enters the river south of the project area to where Mission Road crosses, is roughly the same as it was in the past. This cannot be said of most of the modern river channel, as can be seen in Figure 1-2. A massive river rechannelization project, intended to straighten and deepen the river channel, took place from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s (Meissner et al.

2007:3). The belief at the time was that there was no other way to control the massive floods that were common in San Antonio.

The area around San Antonio is one of the most flood-prone areas in the continental U. S. This is due, in part, to intense, short-duration, rainfall events that punctuate an otherwise semi-arid environment. Shallow clay soils and limestone outcrops contribute to massive runoff into the many creeks draining the Balcones Escarpment in northern Bexar County (Bomar 1995:65; Caran and Baker 1986). These creeks, in turn, converge in and near downtown San Antonio. In the past, this has resulted in devastating floods. Beginning in the early twentieth century, increased population led to increased concern about the loss of life and damage to property inherent in these flood events (Eckardt 2007). North of the Mission Street Bridge the old San Antonio River made a series of loops and bends that have since been straightened by the re-channelization project (Figure 1-2; see also Meissner et al. 2007:4). Meissner et al. (2007:16-18) have shown that the Battle of Concepción may have been fought within one of these loops.



Figure 1-2. Project area, showing the location of Mission Stadium, the original course of the San Antonio River, and an estimate of where the Concepción (Payalache) Acequia, and a late 19th century acequia crossed the project area (Cox 2003).

Previous Investigations

Although the project area is less than 100 m (see Figure 1-1) from the northern wall of Mission Concepción (Ivey and Fox 1999:8), no historic or prehistoric sites have been recorded within the current project area (THC 2007a). For this report there is no need to list all the archaeological projects that have been conducted in association with Mission Concepción. The interested reader can find a brief discussion of these projects and a bibliography in Miller and Meissner (2001).

The JDC campus is located within the Mission Parkway Historic District, which was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975; the nearest historic site is Mission Concepción (Figure 1-1).

In 1974, the project area was included in a comprehensive archaeological and historic structure survey conducted by the THC in partnership with the City of San Antonio (Scurlock et al. 1976). No historic structures or prehistoric sites were encountered in the project area during this survey (Scurlock et al. 1976:1, 69).

In February 2001, CAR contracted with the San Antonio Public Works department to monitor the Mitchell Street and Probandt Street Utility Project (Cox 2003). Archaeological monitoring of the utility installation was considered necessary to document the presence of the Concepción (often called the Pajalache) acequia, a possible late nineteenth century diversion of the channel, possible lateral branches of the San Pedro acequia, and any other cultural deposits that might be impacted by the project (Figure 1-2).

The monitoring project confirmed the presence of a hand-dug trench in a position that was consistent with the nineteenth century acequia seen in a historic photograph of Mission Concepción (Cox 2003:10). The condition of the trench suggested that it had not been kept open for long. There was little evidence of weathering or cleaning, as would have been seen if the trench was in operation for a long time (Cox 2003:8).

When the storm drain trench in the center of Mitchell Street reached the expected location of the Concepción/Pajalache acequia (Cox 2005:5), a circular brick sewer pipe 1.1 m (41") in diameter was discovered (Cox 2003:9). This pipe, built in place in a hand-dug trench, is almost certainly part of the earliest piped sewage system in San Antonio, constructed between 1895-1897 (see Cox 2003:5-6). The new system was probably placed within the old acequia, though it is dug much deeper than the acequia would have been, and the digging of this trench would have destroyed evidence of the original Concepción/Pajalache ditch. No other cultural features or deposits were encountered during the Mitchell

Street excavations. The location of these two acequias during the 2001 project allows a projection of their likely paths cross the current project area (Figure 1-2).

In 2006, GeoMarine, Inc., working for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Ft. Worth District), conducted a survey extending from a point about 1 km (0.62 miles) north of the project area and following an old road south all the way to Mission Espada, some 11.8 km (7.3 miles) south of the project area. This survey crossed the current project area, just east of its center (THC 2007a). No report on this project has yet been published.

Chapter 2: Historic Background

The following is a brief summary of the historic background relating to the project area. Given the close proximity of Mission Concepción to the project area (Ivey and Fox 1999:8), it is probable that the JDC property was a part of the life of the mission, though we do not know what role this particular parcel served in the Colonial period. The principal discussion below involves the Battle of Concepción, some of which may have occurred on the JDC grounds.

The northern edge of Mitchell Street (i. e., the southern edge of the project area) is only about 80 meters (265') north of the north wall of Mission Concepción (Ivey and Fox 1999:8). It is likely that the area was associated with the mission, although there is no known documentation that can clarify the use to which this land was put. Therefore a brief summary of the history of Mission Concepción is included below. Also included is a brief discussion of Mission Stadium, which once stood at the corner of Mitchell Street and Mission Road.

Summary of the History of Mission Concepción

Current research indicates that the Spanish may have selected the location where Mission Concepción currently sits when they founded Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo in 1720, and that this location was also the site of the short-lived Mission San Francisco Xavier de Nájera (1722-1726), begun after San José had been moved (Ivey and Fox 1999:45). The site had been empty for about five years when, on March 5, 1731, one of the three East Texas missions moved to the San Antonio River was reestablished at this place on the east bank of the river and renamed Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña (González 1996:1070). By 1745, a stone wall surrounded the mission compound and a new stone church was half finished. Fields irrigated by the Concepción acequia and its laterals produced 800 bushels of corn a year, large quantities of beans, and other vegetables. The ranch was well stocked with cattle and horses (Habig 1968:129). The church was completed by 1756. Most of the 247 residents lived in adobe houses. Orchards had been planted and cotton was becoming a staple crop (González 1996:1071). By 1789, however, the Native population of Concepción had dropped to 71 (Habig 1968:138). By the time the San Antonio missions began the process of secularization in 1794, the native population at Concepción had dwindled to 41 (González 1996:1071). The church buildings were placed under the care of the missionary from San José. Concepción was reduced to a sub-mission of San José; under the control of the civil authorities of San Antonio (Habig 1968:141-145).

In 1813, the revolutionary forces of Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara chose Concepción as headquarters. Most of Concepción's records, kept at Mission San José, were destroyed during this failed attempt to separate Mexico from Spain (González 1996:1072).

Mexican independence from Spain in 1821 brought final secularization. With the exception of the church and fifteen acres of land, the government sold all mission property (González 1996:1072). Following the secularization, the mission and its church remained unused for a number of years (Habig 1968:148). It was near the mission in 1835 that the Battle of Concepción, the opening battle of the Siege of Béxar, was fought (see below). Subsequently, General Stephen F. Austin made his headquarters at the church for a brief period (Austin 1907). In 1841, the Republic of Texas conveyed the title of ownership of the Mission Concepción church and land to the Catholic Church. The church was reconsecrated on May 28, 1861 (González 1996:1072). The mission became a part of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park under the National Park Service in 1983.

Despite years of abandonment in the early nineteenth century and even occasional use as a cattle barn (Habig 1968:148), the church building at Concepción withstood the centuries well. Most of the other buildings and the stone walls of the mission, however, are now either completely destroyed or are represented only by foundations. It is the only mission church in San Antonio that has not been reconstructed. In fact, it is believed to be the oldest unreconstructed stone church in the United States (González 1996:1070).

The Battle of Concepción, October 28, 1835

On October 11, 1835, Stephen F. Austin was elected commander-in-chief of the Army of the People (Barr 1990:6), also known as the Army of Texas (Austin 1907). Austin wanted to take the Texas capital, San Antonio de Béxar (in those days called Béxar, sometimes spelled Béjar), and drive the Mexican military out of Texas (Barr 1990:7). To this end he took his 300 men and began his approach from Gonzales north towards San Antonio, sending out scouts before each move and trying to ensure that his somewhat disorganized group of volunteers would not be caught by surprise (Barr 1990:10, 15). By the time he was encamped at the remains of Mission Espada he had about 400 men. It was from Espada that the following order was written:

Head Quarters, Mission Espada, October 27th, 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 Béjar as practicable to encamp the army tonight, keeping in view in the selection of this position pasturage and the 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]. 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]

Ninety-two men followed Bowie and Fannin north along the river. They decided on a place where a large bend of the river west of Mission Concepción formed a natural cul-de-sac about one hundred yards across. The river was about 6 to 10 ft. below the relatively flat plain that extended east to the mission.

Because of the lateness in the day, Bowie decided to camp there for the night, instead of returning to Espada, as he had been ordered. He placed Fannin's company along the southern portion of the bend and Colman's men along the northern curve, enabling them to provide crossfire across the plain. Aware that his position left him vulnerable to a surprise attack from the forces of General Martín Perfecto de Cós, commandant of the Mexican forces in San Antonio, Bowie placed pickets drawn from each company and posted a sentry in the tower of the mission (McKeehan 2003).

The morning of October 28, 1835, the countryside was wrapped in a dense fog (McKeehan 2003). Despite the limited visibility, General Cós elected to move upon the small force before they could be

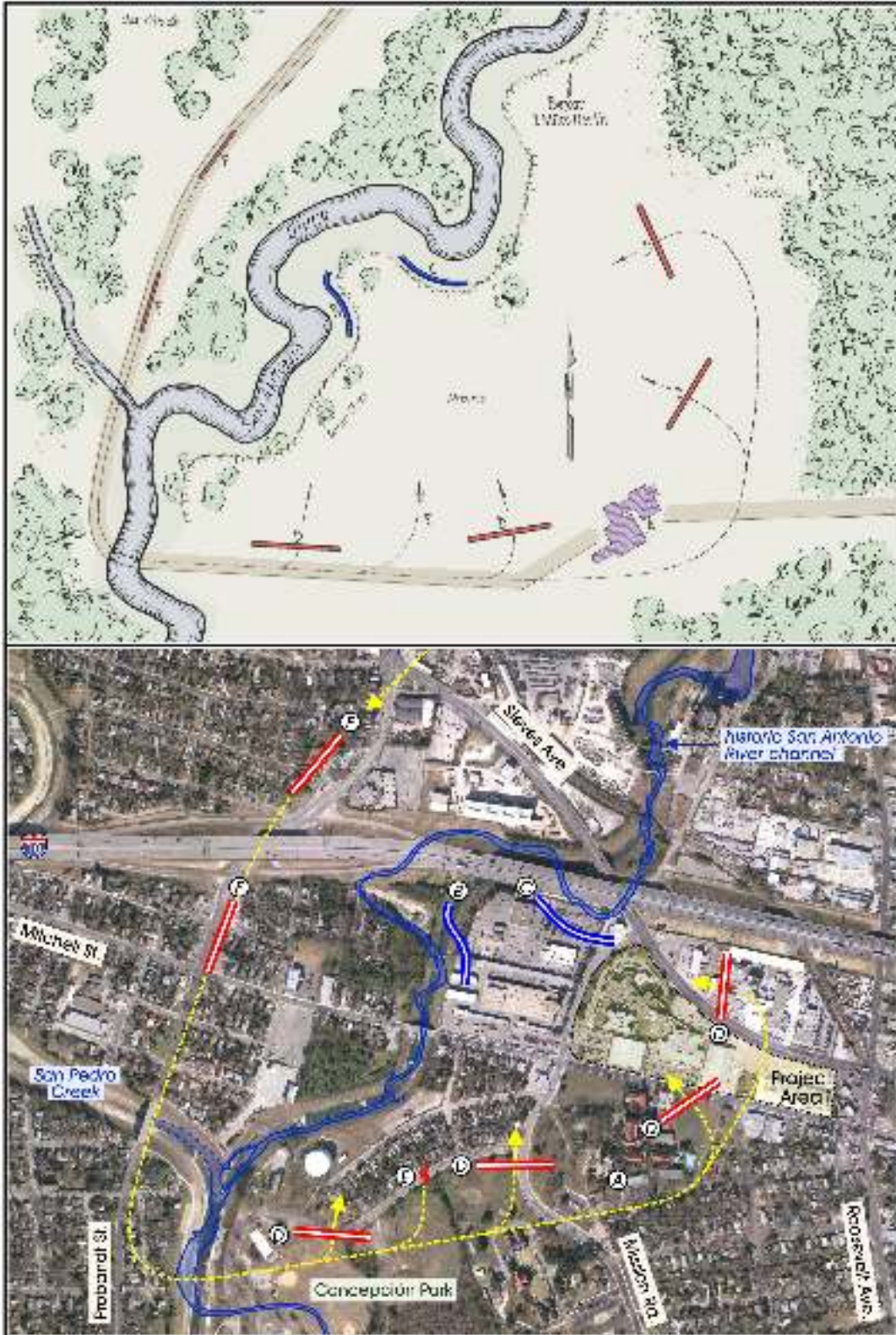


Figure 2-1. *The Battle of Concepción. a) Houston's (1938) map of the battle; b) elements of map superimposed on a recent aerial photograph of the project area.*

reinforced by the main body of the army. He dispatched Colonel Domingo de Ugartechea with a total of about 400 men and two cannons. Infantry approached from the south and east, between the Texans and the Mission, while cavalry were placed along the west bank of the river to cut off retreat (Figure 2-1). The Texans crouched below the protection of the river bank, which formed a natural trench, while musket balls, canister, and grapeshot swept the pecan trees over their heads (Barr 1990:24; Gray 1975:172).

Sharpshooters with Texan long rifles devoted their attention to the gunners and quickly silenced the artillery (McKeehan 2003). As Fannin's position began to draw heavy fire, Bowie maneuvered Colman's men into position to offer them aid. Faced with the additional firepower, the Mexican force faltered. The infantry attempted to bring pressure, but bullets from Texan rifles were hitting them long before their smoothbore muskets were in range (Barr 1990:26). The Mexicans began to fall back. Taking advantage of this retreat, Bowie led a headlong charge against them and was soon able to turn one of their own canons on them. The first conflict of the Siege of Béxar ended. Only one Texan had been killed (McKeehan 2003).

Austin (1907), in his official report, claimed 16 Mexican soldiers were left on the field with reports of as many more carried away. Bowie (McKeehan 2003) claimed the number was about 67. A count of 27 bodies with about 20 believed to have been carried away or thrown in the river was given in a report that is by far the most interesting contemporary account of the battle. This is a secondhand account told to an anonymous writer that appeared in the second edition of *A Visit to Texas in 1831* (Gray 1975), which originally was published in 1836. This account from a participant in the battle was included in an appendix added to the second edition. It is the most detailed of all the reports that were made at the time. The account is also of particular interest because it is one often missed by historians, probably because the battle is described as the Battle of Salado and the author confuses Mission Espada and Mission Concepción. Yet every detail described in other accounts of the battle is mentioned.

However many Mexican soldiers were killed in the battle there can be no doubt that the result of the battle made a great impression on both the Texans and the Mexicans. Texans had been outnumbered roughly 3 to 1 (not counting the cavalry units on the west bank of the river, who did not play a significant part in the battle), and had placed themselves in a poor position, with the bluffs on the west side of the river making retreat that way impossible. Still, the battle had been won by the smaller force (Barr 1990).

Two markers, one in 1935 honoring Richard Andrews, the first Texan casualty of the war, and another in 1966 noting the site of the Bowie/Fannin camp, were placed in Concepción Park (THC 2007b; Walraven

and Walraven 1993:41). However, a recent look at the map published by Barr (1990:23) raised questions about the tradition that the battle took place in or near Concepción Park (Meissner et al. 2007:16-18). Barr's map was based on one found in Andrew J. Houston's book *Texas Independence* (1938), and is shown in the top figure of Figure 2-1. Houston, the son of Sam Houston, included a number of "military" maps in a map pocket at the back of the book, one of which depicts the Battle of Concepción. However, no specific reference to the source of the information in the map is given by Houston, whose description of the battle was apparently based on Bowie's report (McKeehan 2003).

Figure 2-1 shows that the map is a fairly accurate description of the old river before rechannelization. Barr describes the battle location as one-quarter mile west of Mission Concepción "where the river curved in a horseshoe away from the mission" (Barr 1990:22). There are two places that are roughly west of Mission Concepción where the river curves away from the mission. One is at the point where San Pedro Creek enters the river across from Concepción Park, and the other is further north (Figure 2-1). Both bends are roughly one-quarter mile, to the southwest and northwest respectively, from the mission. According to Houston's (1938) map the battle took place in the northern of these two bends. The eye witness account in *A Visit to Texas in 1831* (Gray 1975) mentions that the site Bowie chose for his camp was a quarter-mile "beyond" the mission. Since they were coming from the south "beyond" was more likely to be north of the mission. Rechannelization cut across this northern bend, and IH 10 now covers the northern half of the old bend, where Houston's (1938) map claims Captain Colman's company was placed at the beginning of the battle (Figure 2-1).

Meissner et al. (2007:16-18) were not the first to notice the discrepancy in the maps and records and the traditional placement of the battle in what is now Concepción Park. In 1947, Charles Ramsdell, a local historian, wrote an article for the Express Magazine of the San Antonio Express newspaper conveying his belief that the battle took place in the more northern bend of the river shown in Figure 2-1 (Ramsdell 1947).

Mission Stadium

In an effort to learn what disturbances to natural sediments had taken place in the past, CAR personnel examined available historic maps, including Sanborn insurance maps (Sanborn Map Company 2001). Small or temporary structures may have existed prior to 1946, but no structures appear on the Sanborn

maps in the project area until Mission Stadium was constructed that year, on the corner of E. Mitchell St. and Mission Rd. (Sanborn Map Company 2001; see also Figure 1-2).

Mission Stadium was an important part of city life for many thousands of baseball fans during its roughly 17 years of use by Texas League minor league teams (Figure 2-2). The stadium was first used for the 1947 season by the San Antonio team, known as the Missions, who were associated, consecutively, with the St. Louis Browns, the Baltimore Orioles, and the Chicago Cubs (Pastore and Pastore 2007). In 1959, the team name was changed to the Bullets, presumably to acknowledge the new association with the Houston Colt .45s (Pastore and Pastore 2007). By that time, however, local baseball was in a decline, as a result of such factors as television, the growing popularity of football and even, according to David King (2004:5), home air conditioning. The 1964 Bullets, one of the best teams in Texas League history, won the championship, but had the lowest attendance in the league (King 2004:5). The team owner moved them to Amarillo. The stadium was torn down about 1974 (Pastore and Pastore 2007).



Figure 2-2. *Photograph of Mission Stadium taken in 1947. Note the corner of Mitchell St. and Mission Road in upper left corner.* Photograph courtesy of the San Antonio Missions.

Chapter 3: Methods, Results, and Recommendations

Methods

After consultation with the SAHPO and BCIS, Mark Denton of the THC determined that, although most of the project area had undoubtedly been disturbed by previous construction, there was a possibility that pockets of undisturbed sediments, possibly containing evidence of the Battle of Concepción, may exist in some parts of the project area. He proposed that four backhoe trenches should be dug as follows (see Figure 3-1):



Figure 3-1. Project area showing location of backhoe trenches.

- at the corner of Mitchell and Mission, between the sidewalk and the parking lot;
- south of the intersection of Mission Road with Steves Avenue;
- in the playground area near the center of the project area; and
- in the parking lot north of the Rice Building.

The four backhoe trenches were dug on June 20 and 21, 2007. Each was approximately 60 cm (2') wide, 150 cm (5') deep, and 4 to 7 m (13' to 23') long. Backdirt was carefully examined for cultural materials, but was not screened. When previously undisturbed sediments were noted in a trench, a profile was drawn. With the exception of BHT #1, all trench profiles were photographed. A sudden and violent rainstorm prevented photo documentation of BHT #1. The exact location of the trenches was determined by measurement to current landmarks. As soon as each trench was documented, it was backfilled.

Results

BHT #1

BHT #1 was located at the corner of Mitchell St. and Mission Rd., between the sidewalk and the parking lot (Figure 3-1). This BHT revealed modern fill to a depth of ca. 50-55 cm below the surface (cmbs) above an undisturbed, uniform dark silty clay extending to the bottom of the trench (Figure 3-2). No cultural materials were observed in the trench walls or in the backfill.

BHT #2

BHT #2 was located south of the intersection of Mission Road and Steves Avenue (Figure 3-1) in the grassy area north of the JDC parking lot. The trench was placed as close as possible to the parking lot. An examination of the landscape suggested that fill had been used to raise the ground surface north of the parking lot, and by placing the trench as far south as possible, it was hoped that there would be as little as possible of this fill in the trench. However, the profile of BHT #2 showed no undisturbed sediments (Figure 3-3). At least three layers of modern fill were seen in this trench under the topsoil. No cultural materials were observed in the trench walls or in the backfill.

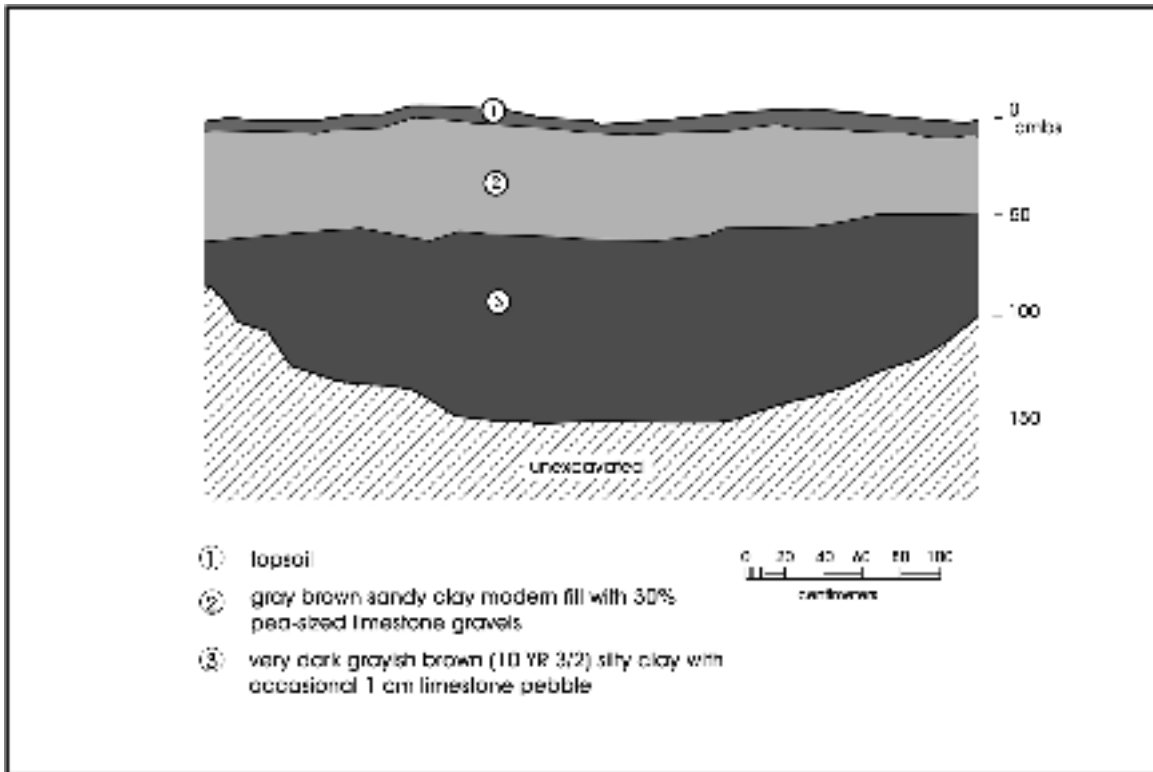


Figure 3-2. Profile of the northeast wall of Backhoe Trench 1.

BHT #3

BHT #3 was located inside the JDC facility, in a playground near the center of the project area (Figure 3-1). Two layers of modern fill were noted under a layer of topsoil (Figure 3-4). Beneath this was a thin layer of dark brown silty clay that was similar to underlying undisturbed sediments, but this layer could be easily differentiated from the layer below by relatively friable texture and by the large number of small fragments of rusted metal present. The undisturbed dark silty clay layer below this was mottled with a slightly more reddish silty clay. Beneath this was a layer of very light-colored clay loam containing a very fine sand component (Figure 3-4).

BHT # 4

BHT #4 was located in a parking lot north of the Rice building on the eastern side of the project area (Figure 3-1). The backhoe had to cut through a thin asphalt and gravel pavement. The trench was dug to 142 cmbs but no undisturbed sediments were located (Figure 3-5). Modern fill, consisting of layers of rocky fill above a layer of cement-stabilized sandy clay, a modern construction material often used to surround utility lines, comprised the entire profile. The trench was terminated once the surface of the cement stabilized sand had been seen across the entire trench. Although no buried utility lines were

identified by locator crews in the area, there was concern that the cement-stabilized sandy clay had been placed over a utility line that no longer appeared on their maps. No cultural materials were observed in the trench walls or in the backfill.



Figure 3-3. *Photograph of the south wall of BHT #2, showing layers of modern fill.*

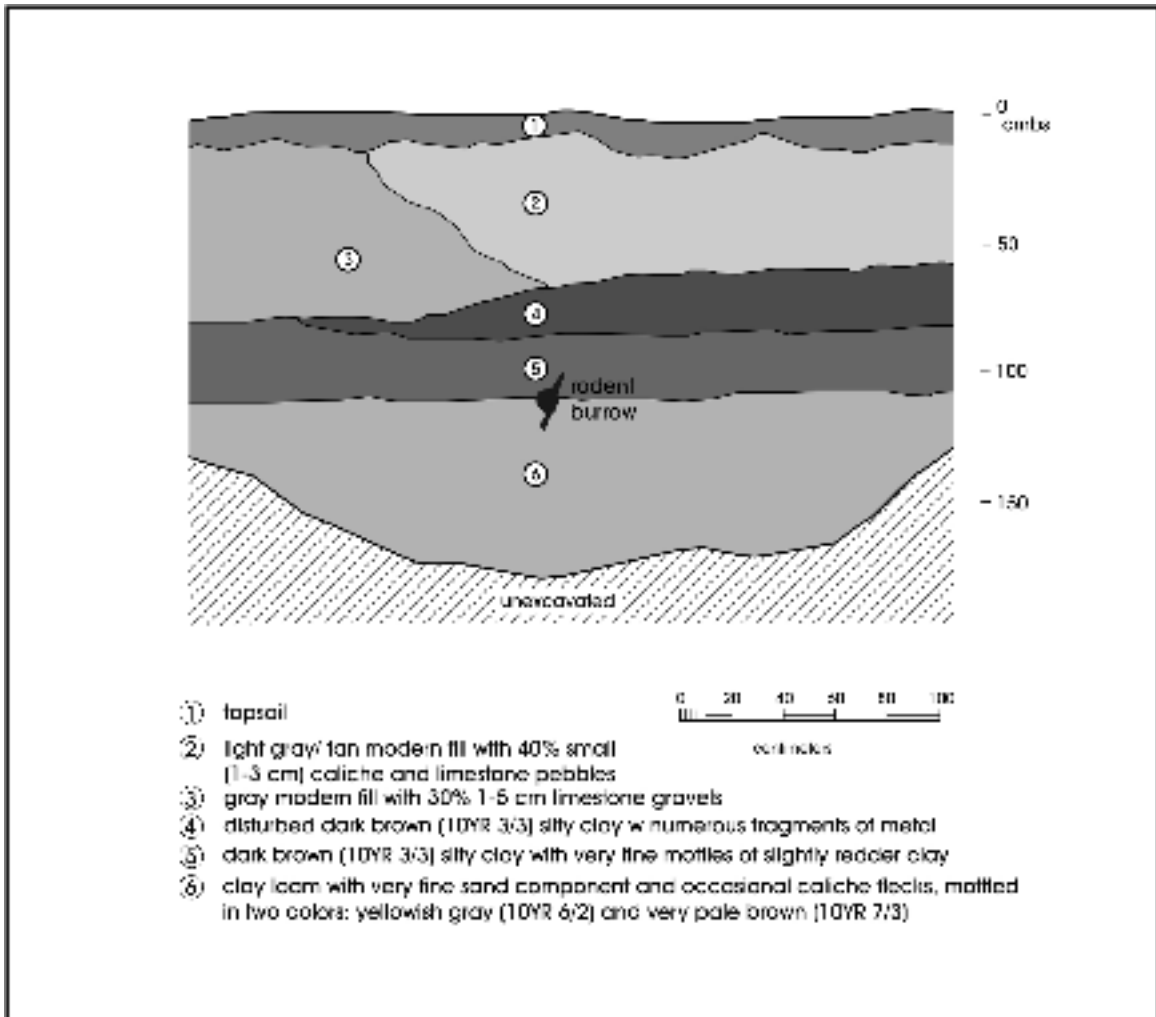


Figure 3-4. Profile of the east wall of Backhoe Trench 3.



Figure 3-5. Photograph of the north wall of BHT #4, showing layers of modern fill.

Summary and Recommendation

At the recommendation of the THC, four backhoe trenches were excavated on the grounds of the Bexar County Juvenile Detention Center in advance of extensive construction of new facilities. The backhoe trenches were considered necessary due to recent research (Meissner et al. 2007) that indicated that the project area may be on the eastern edge of the battlefield of the Battle of Concepción, fought between Texan and Mexican forces in October, 1835. Most of the project area had already been disturbed by construction, first of the Mission Stadium baseball field in 1946, and later by the buildings of the JDC. Four areas that appeared minimally disturbed (Figure 3-1) were tested with backhoe trenches to determine if any remnants of the battle remained in these areas. Of the four backhoe trenches, BHT #2 and BHT #4

proved to contain only modern fill. BHT #1 and BHT #3 had undisturbed sediments beneath layers of modern fill. However, no cultural materials were observed in the walls or in the backdirt of any of the four trenches.

Depending on the exact footprint and depth of impact from the proposed new construction, as well as the depth of disturbance in the past by construction of Mission Stadium and 233 Mitchell St., remnants of the Concepción/Pajalache acequia and/or the lateral (see Figure 1-2) may be encountered immediately east of the southeast corner of the proposed new building. However, since both the Concepción/Pajalache acequia and the lateral have been well-documented nearby (Cox 2003), we feel that additional documentation is not necessary. Although the exact alignment of the Concepción/Pajalache acequia through the project area is not known, none of the proposed construction would allow us to document the location of the acequia in the northern part of the project area.

Therefore, CAR recommends that the construction for the new Juvenile Probation Center, renovations and expansion of the Juvenile Detention Center and demolition of the Rice Building and the building at 233 E. Mitchell be permitted to continue as planned. No adverse affect on significant cultural deposits or features is anticipated.

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