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An Archaeological Assessment of Boerne City Park, Kendall County, Texas

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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF
BOERNE CITY PARK, KENDALL COUNTY, TEXAS

Thomas C. Kelly and Thomas R. Hester

Center for Archaeological Research
The University of Texas at San Antonio
Archaeological Survey Report, No. 21

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INTRODUCTION

As part of its planning for development of Boerne City Park, the Advisory Board of the Boerne Parks and Recreation Department authorized an archaeological assessment of the park area in May, 1976. The assessment was carried out by the Center for Archaeological Research at The University of Texas at San Antonio, and was supervised by the authors. We wish to thank Dr. Dewey D. Davis, Chairman, Park Advisory Board, for his assistance during this project.

THE SURVEY

The scope of our investigation at Boerne City Park can be best described as "cultural resources reconnaissance" (General Rules of Practice and Procedure 1976), to determine the presence and significance of any archaeological or historical resources that might lie within the park boundaries. Particular attention was paid to those areas of the park that might be modified through future development. Previous archaeological research in Kendall County has been summarized by Bass and Hester (1975; see also Kelly and Hester 1976); a check of the Center's files and those of the Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory, The University of Texas at Austin, revealed that no archaeological or historical sites had been previously documented in the park.

Boerne City Park lies along a 1.3 mile stretch of Cibolo Creek, extending from Ammann Road to its intersection with Menger Creek (Fig. 1). The Southern Pacific railroad tracks mark the Eastern boundary for a distance of 3/4 mile, to a point where a cross fence runs to the west, then south, to Menger Creek. A fence just above the

This page has been redacted because it contains restricted information.

creek bank serves as the western boundary. In all, the park contains a total of 125 acres.

The entire park area was covered on foot and two archaeological sites were found. Dense grass and brush obscured the ground surface over an estimated 25% of the area, so there is a possibility that other sites were not observed.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

As a result of the on-the-ground survey of the park area, two prehistoric archaeological sites were discovered. No historical remains were noted. Several kinds of prehistoric Indian sites have been previously noted in Kendall County, including open occupation sites (camp sites), burned rock middens, buried terrace sites, rockshelters, quarry/workshops, and lithic scatters (cf. Bass and Hester 1975:3). Archaeological research in this county, and in adjacent areas of Texas, has led to the formulation of a general chronological sequence for the prehistoric cultures. The *Paleo-Indian* period, dating from ca. 9200 B.C. to ca. 6000 B.C., represents habitation of the region by hunting and gathering peoples during the terminal phases of the Pleistocene. The *Archaic* period follows and was long-lived, ranging from 5000 B.C. to A.D. 500/1000. Archaeological sites of this period, again representative of hunting and gathering Indian groups, are very common in central and south central Texas. The *Late Prehistoric* (or Neo-American) period lasted from around A.D. 500/1000 up to the time of European contact. Sites of this era are characterized by tiny arrow points (the bow and arrow was introduced into the area sometime around A.D. 1000) and other types of lithic tools, and occasionally, by

plainware ceramics.

The Sites

The two prehistoric sites found during the course of the survey are briefly described below. Both have been assigned permanent site designations in the files of the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory. In the trinomial designation system used by that laboratory, a site designation, such as 41 KE 67 (see below), indicates that the site is in the state of Texas (indicated by the number 41), within the county of Kendall (KE), and is the 67th site thus far documented for that county.

41 KE 67 (Boerne Park #1)

The site is located 38 m (at a bearing of 215°) from a city water well in the northern portion of the park. An area of approximately 10 m in diameter revealed a thin scatter of lithic debris. A battered dart point (type unknown; Fig. 2,a), dating from the Archaic era, was the only diagnostic artifact collected. A bifacially modified chert (flint) cobble and two small bifacial quarry blanks were the other specimens noted at the site (Fig. 2,b-d). A few flakes, resulting from both hard hammer and soft hammer production techniques, were observed at the site.

The site is apparently the result of very temporary use by prehistoric peoples, perhaps as a one-time workshop locus. No burned rock or other forms of cultural debris were recorded.

41 KE 68 (Boerne Park #2)

Site 41 KE 68 was found in what might be considered an excellent camping area--in an oak grove on a flat terrace above the highest bluff

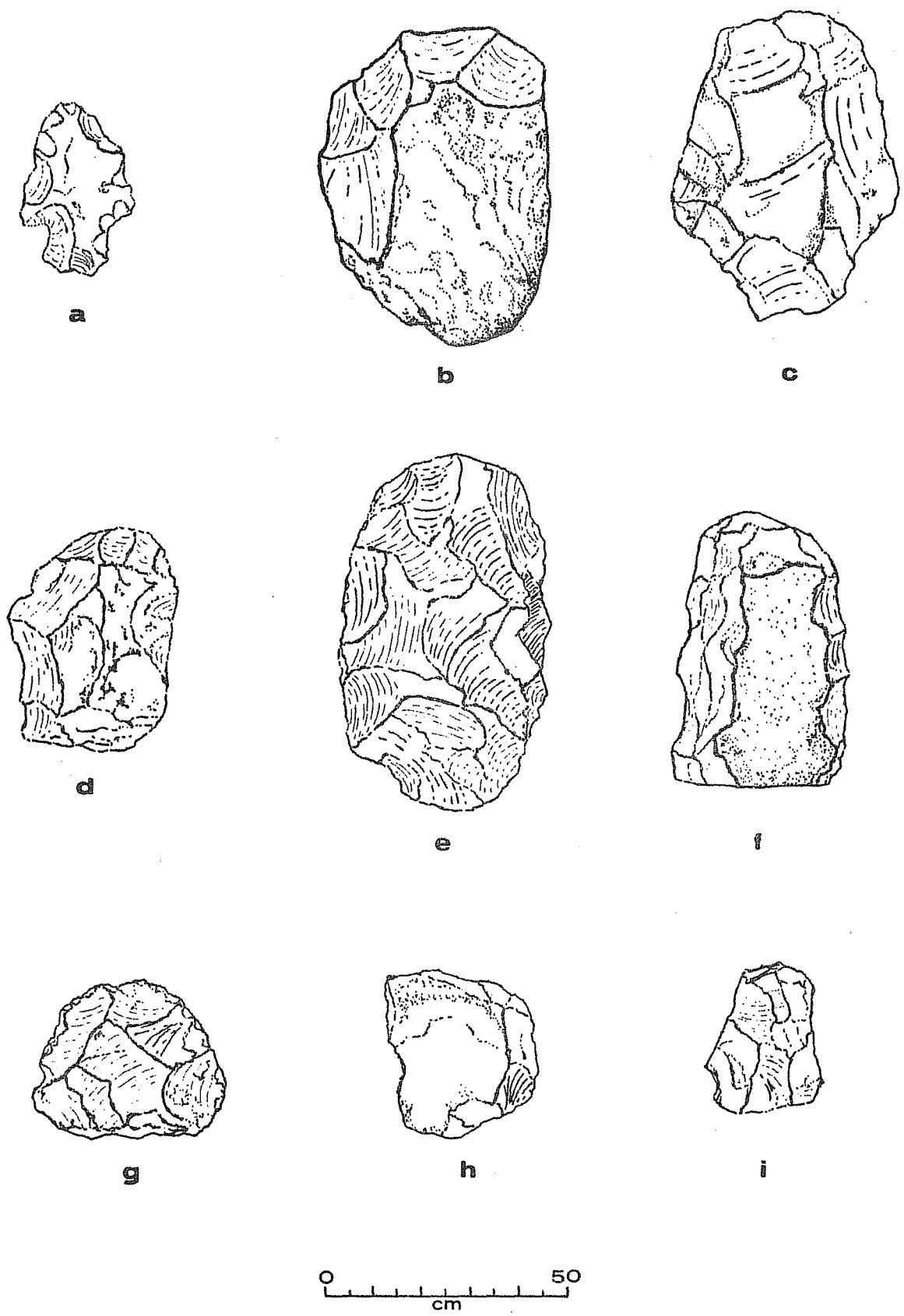


Figure 2. Artifacts from Sites in Boerne City Park. a-d, 41 KE 67; e-i, 41 KE 68.

in the park area. This is on the east bank of Cibolo Creek. The site is situated just north of a series of massive stone steps extending from the bluff top to the creek bed, and is 10 m northeast of a steel post anchoring a park garbage container. Much of the site debris has been exposed by erosion in a park roadway.

Lithic remains were noted scattered over an area 18 m in length. A small, selective sample of materials was collected and is illustrated in Fig. 2. These include a fragmentary dart point (Fig. 2,i), an incomplete ovate biface (Fig. 2,e; the specimen was apparently never finished because of multiple hinge fractures); a side scraper (Fig. 2,f), and two scrapers made on flakes (Fig. 2,g-h). Scattered burned rocks were seen on the site surface, and shovel tests revealed charcoal-stained earth. The area apparently functioned as a camp site in prehistoric times. However, survey investigations failed to reveal any evidence of significant occupational deposits within the site boundaries. Local relic-collectors have undoubtedly scoured the surface of the site in recent times; a pile of flakes discarded by one of these collectors reflects this activity.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An archaeological survey of Boerne City Park revealed the presence of two prehistoric archaeological sites. It is possible that other sites might be found in the 25% of the area which could not be closely examined due to heavy vegetational cover. No other cultural resources were observed.

Both of the recorded sites presumably date from the Archaic period, but this temporal assignment is tenuous, since clearly-diagnostic arti-

facts were not found. Site 41 KE 67 is a place where brief and limited activities (presumably flint-knapping) took place; all of the materials are exposed on the surface. Site 41 KE 68 served as an occupation site. However, it apparently does not cover a very large area and no substantial buried deposits were found. Perhaps a program of test excavations would provide more substantive information on the nature and extent of the site. We consider both of these sites to be important, since they are representative of the prehistoric Indian utilization of the local area; we urge the Park Advisory Board to ensure their protection in planning for future development. We do not believe that either site is of the significance to warrant nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Should additional archaeological or historical materials be discovered in the course of any future modification of park terrain, we urge the City of Boerne to contact professional archaeologists before proceeding further.

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