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ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTING OF SITE 41YN2
YOUNG COUNTY, TEXAS

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Texas
State Department of Highways and Public Transportation
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ABSTRACT

Testing of portions of Site 41YN2, the O. W. Hill Site, in Young County, Texas, was undertaken to determine eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and to determine site depth, cultural context, and archaeological significance. The site is located on a hillside and terrace of the Brazos River downstream from the confluence of the Clear Fork of the Brazos River and adjacent to the State Highway 67 crossing. Evidence recovered indicates that insufficient material exists within the highway right-of-way to warrant further investigations and that those portions of the site within the right-of-way do not meet the criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological Site 41YN2, the O. W. Hill Site, was recorded at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory of the Balcones Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin during the 1930's. The site was discovered during archaeological reconnaissance of the Possum Kingdom Reservoir conducted by the WPA under the direction of A. T. Jackson. The site was originally designated NT-44 by investigator A. M. Woolsey. The site was named the O. W. Hill Site for the landowner at the time of the initial investigation by A. T. Jackson and George R. Fox. Fox conducted archaeological excavations at the site from May 15th to July 8th 1939.

The improvements and replacement of the State Highway 67 Brazos River bridge were determined to require additional right-of-way. An on-site historical-archaeological survey was conducted by members of the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation (SDHPT) professional cultural resources staff on April 18, 1984. Testing of the portion of Site 41YN2 lying within the proposed right-of-way was recommended in accordance with Procedures for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties (36 CFR, Part 800).

During the period of September 10th to September 14th, 1984, testing operations were conducted by Joe T. Denton of the SDHPT professional cultural resources staff, with field personnel provided by the SDHPT District 3 Graham Residency office. The object of the test was to determine whether that portion of the site lying within the right-of-way met the criteria of eligibility for inclusion within the National Register of Historic Places, and to determine the nature of the deposits, the cultural context and the archaeological significance of the site. Testing operations were carried out under the auspices of Procedures for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties (36 CFR, Part 800), procedures prescribed and endorsed by the Federal Highway Administration.

The project affecting the site is an on-system bridge replacement involving the construction of a new bridge structure on new location parallel to and downstream from the existing bridge across the Brazos River. The existing bridge, which contains two Parker Through Truss spans, will be removed. It has been determined by the State Historic Preservation Officer that the existing bridge structure does not meet the criteria for inclusion within the National Register of Historic Places. The replacement bridge structure will be 840 ft. in length with a clear roadway width of 44 ft. Existing right-of-way width is 100 ft. and the project will require an additional 50 ft. of new right-of-way.

Site 41YN2 is located east of existing **SH** 67 on a hill and terrace east of the Brazos River (Fig. 1), downstream from the confluence of the clear Fork of the Brazos and the Brazos Rivers near South Bend, Texas. The site extends approximately 1600 ft. east and southeast of the project area. The setting is rural with adjacent lands presently utilized as ranchland and oilfields. Ground cover is sparse over those areas of the site away from the river, consisting primarily of grasses, weeds, prickly pear, and yucca. Along the edge of the bluff and the river bed, trees and understory vegetation form a dense growth.

Soils at the site consist of fine, red sands and sandy red clays of varying depths. The sand deposit within the right-of-way varies in thickness from very thin- less than 10 cm, to 1.5 m. The underlying rock stratum is a gray, limey sandstone. The soil on the hilltop consists of fine, red sand with some gravel. The surface is broken and undulating, and is subject to erosion by both wind and water.

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Cultural evidence within the right-of-way is sparse and consists of scattered flakes noted on the surface. The cultural evidence increases as one moves uphill, outside of the right-of-way, and the heaviest concentration appears to be some 500-600 ft. southeast of the project area. Cultural evidence in those areas lying outside of the right-of-way consists primarily of lithic debris, occasional biface fragments, scrapers, and scattered burned rocks.

PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

Previous archaeological investigations at Site 41YN2, conducted in 1939, by the WPA resulted in the recovery of 1938 artifacts, exclusive of some fragments which were not included in the manuscript on file at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory. Recovered materials consisted of bifaces (often called war club spikes), scrapers, cores, manos, metates, projectile points, and some pottery. Also recovered were some bone and mussel shell artifacts. Excavations revealed 21 hearths, one burial, several cists, one post mold and one reported "tipi pole". The excavations and artifacts were reported in a manuscript by George R. Fox, on file at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory.

The bulk of the recovered material from the 1939 investigations occurred either on the surface (24.3%) or within the first 12 in. below the surface (58.6%). Fox reported that some flakes and occasional artifacts were recovered as deep as 60 in. below ground surface. The 1939 excavations consisted of large trenches and excavated areas in addition to scattered test units. Two main areas were explored; one on the top of the hill, approximately 300 ft. outside of the project right-of-way, and a second approximately 900 ft. southeast of the present project. These excavation areas were limited by the presence of three oil wells and related storage tanks and pipelines. Much of the area had been disturbed prior to the 1939 excavations.

The area closest to the present highway project was the least productive area investigated by the WPA. Fourteen 5 ft. by 5 ft. test units were excavated in this area of the site, with only two hearths uncovered.

Both of these hearths were located in the upper 5 inches. Fox noted that the test indicated a definite presence of cultural material, but no extensive village existed on the hill (Fox 1939, p. 11). The general comments concerning the site stressed the crudeness of the material recovered.

A review of the collection shows the site to have been occupied from the Archaic to Late Prehistoric times. The major occupation appears to have been concentrated in the late Archaic period and is represented by Marcos, Ensor, and small expanding-stem projectile points. The Late Prehistoric is represented by Perdiz, Harrell, and Washita arrowpoints.

PROCEDURES

Archaeological testing of portions of Site **41YN2** within the SDHPT project right-of-way consisted of one 1 by 2 meter test unit and three 1 by 1 meter units. The units were excavated by hand using pick and shovel and vertical control was maintained in **10** cm levels. The soil was passed through **0.25** in. hardware cloth and all recovered material bagged and labeled by unit and level and removed to the SDHPT Laboratory for Archaeological Studies for analysis and temporary storage.

Test units were placed along the east right-of-way at **100** ft. intervals at SH **67** station markers of exact known location (Fig. **2**). In addition, a soil profile was cleared in a erosional area in order to examine the depositional units at a great depth than in the test units. Test Unit **1** was excavated to a depth of **70** cm, the deepest of all the test units.

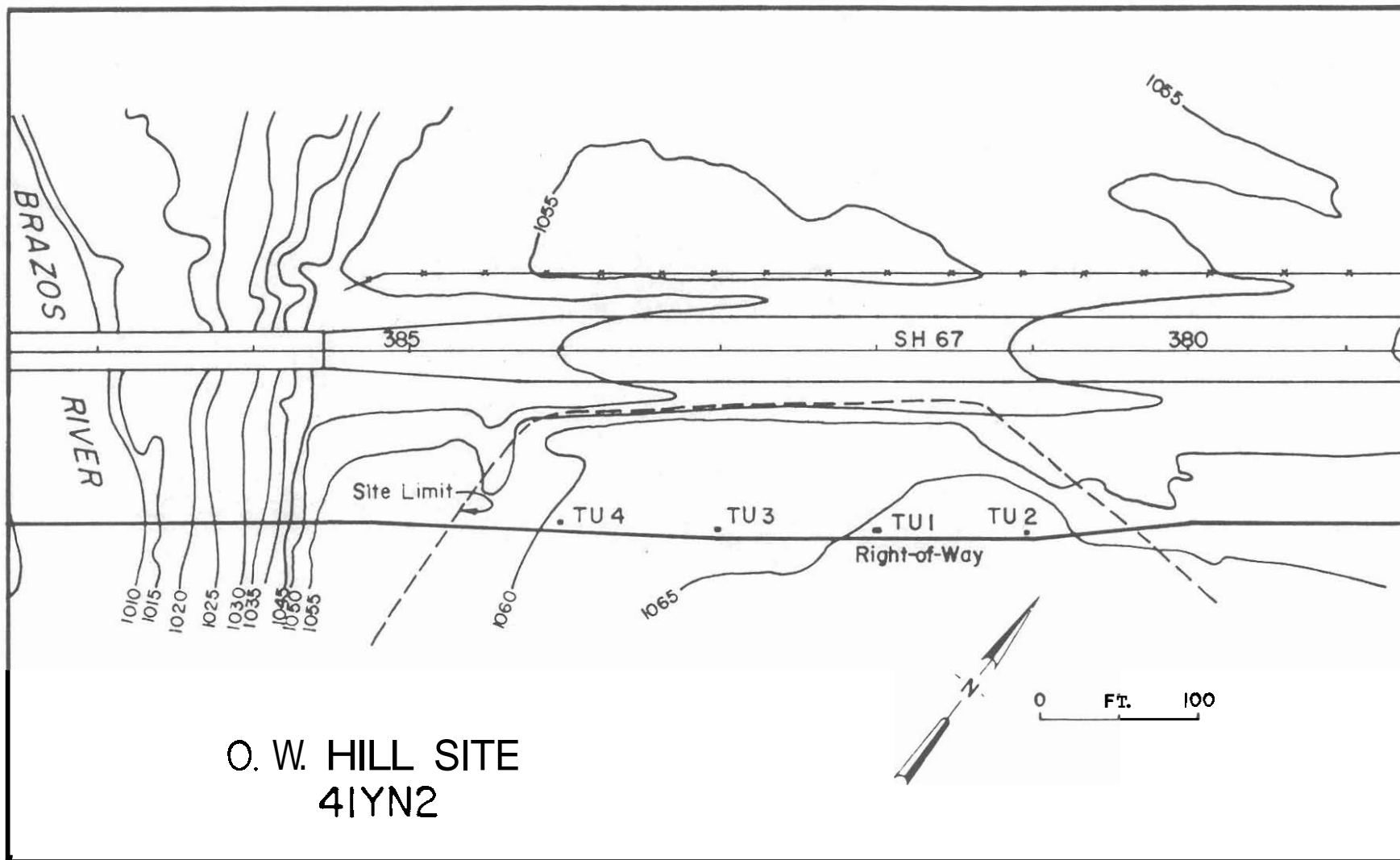


FIGURE 2. Map of Site 41YN2 within the right-of-way of SH 67 and location of Test Units.

OBSERVATIONS

A total of 17 flakes and one, clear, bottle-glass fragment was recovered during the testing operations. All flakes were recovered within the first 40 cm with the greatest occurrence in Levels 2 and 3. The clear bottle-glass fragment was recovered in Level 1. Test Unit 1 produced the majority of the cultural material, 11 flakes. Test Unit 3 was the least productive with only 1 flake. No bone, mussel shell, or burned rock was encountered during the test. No diagnostic artifacts, tools, or features were observed. Soils encountered in the test consisted of undifferentiated fine red sand which was very hard at the time the test was conducted.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of material recovered from testing of that portion of Site 41YN2 located within the SDHPT project right-of-way, it is believed that this portion of the site does not meet the criteria for inclusion within the National Register of Historic Places. This portion of the site exhibits a general paucity of cultural material and does not warrant further investigation. Excavations conducted in 1939 by the WPA confirm the opinion that the portion of the site to be affected by the proposed project is very unproductive. These excavations demonstrated that there is a decrease in cultural material and one moves towards SH 67. The main portions of the site lie well outside the highway right-of-way. No further investigation of that part of Site 41YN2 lying within the right-of-way is recommended.

REFERENCES CITED

Fox, George R.

ND Field Report Excavation of Site NT-44 (41YN2). Manuscript on file at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, The University of Texas at Austin.