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Test Excavations at the Jodie Bender Site, 41HS11 Harrison County, Texas

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Test Excavations at the Jodie Bender Site, 41HS11 Harrison County, Texas

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**TEST EXCAVATIONS
AT THE JODIE BENDER SITE, 41HS11
HARRISON COLINTY, TEXAS**

**By
Alan J. Wormser**

**Texas
State Department of Highways and Public Transportation
Highway Design Division
May 1990**

ABSTRACT

The Jodie Bender Site, 41HS11, is a prehistoric Caddoan settlement on Little Cypress Bayou in Harrison County, Texas. Personnel from the Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation (SDHPT) tested the site in March and September 1989 as part of a bridge replacement project. The site is on a high terrace away from the bridge location, but the project includes cutting the terrace in order to meet current roadway specifications and will have a direct impact on site 41HS11.

Previous descriptions of the site indicate that there is an Early Caddo component as well as a Middle Caddo (Whelan Phase) component. A great quantity of prehistoric material was found at the site when it was first reported by E. O. Miller and Jack Hughes in 1951, but during the course of testing, very little cultural material was found within the right-of-way. Most of the material recovered during testing appears to date to the Whelan Phase.

Because of the small amount of cultural material recovered and overall lack of features, the project area is considered to probably be in an area of low prehistoric activity. Further excavation within the proposed highway right-of-way would probably not produce significant information about the site and it is recommended that the bridge project continue as planned.

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INTRODUCTION

Site 41HS11 (the Jodie Bender Site) is on an upper terrace of Little Cypress Bayou near the western end of Caddo Lake. First reported in 1951 (Miller 1951), the site was relocated by the Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation (SDHPT) during a routine archaeological survey for a bridge replacement on FM 134 at Little Cypress Bayou. Surface collections were made in the 1950s and Thurmond (1981) has described these collections briefly.

Testing was conducted in March and September 1989. As a result of these test excavations it was determined that the bridge replacement project will effect portions of the site where apparently little prehistoric activity took place. No features were found and artifact densities were very low within the portion of the site to be disturbed by the bridge project.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Harrison and Marion Counties are within the Austroriparian biotic province (Blair 1950), which extends throughout East Texas from Harris County northward to Red River County. Within this environmental zone pine-oak forests predominate. Blair notes that the vegetation is similar to that found eastward to the Atlantic coast. Gould identifies roughly the same portion of Texas as the Pineywoods area (Gould 1969) and notes that the pines are probably a subclimax or fire disclimax vegetation for the region. Soils of the Pineywoods are generally sandy and acid. Carr (1977) characterizes most of northeast Texas, including the study area, as a single climatic area typified by summer droughts with peaks in rainfall during April and May, and again during November and December.

CULTURAL SETTING

Previous Archaeological Research

There is a long history of archaeological research in the northeast Texas which has been summarized elsewhere (c.f., Northern and Skiles 1981). In 1920, Dr. J.E. Pearce, of the University of Texas, investigated mounds near Caddo Lake. By the 1930s there was enough interest in Caddoan prehistory that the Works Progress Administration contracted with A.T. Jackson and W.R. Goldschmidt to conduct surveys and excavations in northeast Texas.

From the late 1930s to the early 1950s, little new research was conducted. Starting in 1951, archaeological investigations were conducted in the Ferrell's Bridge Reservoir, now called Lake 0' the Pines (Miller, Moorman, and Jelks 1951). During the initial survey of Lake 0' the Pines, 34 archaeological sites were reported and surface collections were made from 31 of them. Of these, 14 were considered to be "villages" and 20 were labelled "camps", but these assessments were based only on the relative sizes of the sites. They noted sites from a range of time periods, and noted that the pottery collected tended to be grog tempered, with some bone and sand temper. Shell temper was not found in their sherd sample.

Excavations at the Harroun site were reported in the late 1950s (Jelks and Tunnel 1959). Davis described work at the Whelan Site (Davis 1958). Jones (1957) reported 2 sites in Gregg County about 3 miles south of Longview, Texas, which he attributed to the Alto Focus.

Gibson (1969) examined archaeological resources in Caddo Lake along the Louisiana and Texas border. Webb et al. (1969) reported on excavations conducted in 1965 at the Resch Site in Harrison County just south of Marshall, Texas. There he found remains which he assigned to the Middle Archaic, Late Archaic-La Harpe, Tchefuncte, Marksville-Troyville, Coles Creek and Caddo Periods.

From 1971 through 1974, the Texas Highway Department conducted excavations at the Marshall Powder Mill, a Civil War era site in northern Harrison County (Weir 1973, Luke 1978). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s many archeological surveys were conducted in connection with transmission line construction and mining activities (c.f., Dibble 1977, Nichols et al. 1979, Kluge, Turpin and Thurmond 1979, Day and Laurens-Day 1982, Carlson 1985).

Two studies of note in the area are those by Thurmond (1981) and Lisk (1984). Thurmond summarized the archeology of the Little Cypress drainage and suggested relationships between the Titus and Whelan Foci and their distribution in northeast Texas. Lisk analyzed pottery from the Whelan Site.

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Chronological Sequence

Because of an abundance of diagnostic pottery styles, rapid evolution of political and religious institutions, and relative complexity of prehistoric Caddo cultures, archaeologists have been able to examine chronology more easily than in most of Texas. As a result, East Texas chronology is fairly well defined for the Woodland and Late Prehistoric Periods. The chronology presented below follows that presented by Nichols et al. (1979:2/6) and Thurmond (1981), and is specific to Caddo Lake and Little Cypress Bayou drainage. Complicating matters is the fact that the earliest chronologies were based on the McKern system, whereas modern chronologies are loosely based on the concepts of Wiley and Phillips. It should also be noted that authors variously continue to use the focus names as names for phases, and that the term "period" is used to apply to either the phase name or the stage. Thus, reference is frequently made to the Archaic "Period" or Whelan "Phase". A more consistent use of these terms is needed, and a generalized chronology appears below.

Table 1. The chronological sequence in northeast Texas.

<u>MODERN CHRONOLOGY:</u> <u>STAGE</u>	<u>PHASE</u>	<u>MCKERN SYSTEM:</u> <u>ASPECT</u>	<u>FOCUS</u>	<u>SUGGESTED DATES:</u>
HISTORIC	Caddo V	Fulton	Kinsloe	AD 1600-1800 Allen (Hasinai?)
FORMATIVE	Caddo IV	Fulton	Titus	AD 1500-1600
	Caddo III	Fulton	Whelan	AD 1400-1500
	Caddo II	Gibson		AD 1200-1400
	Caddo I	Gibson	Alto	AD 700-1200
ARCHAIC	Coles Creek Troyville Marksville Tchefuncte	"Pre-Caddo"		AD 400-700
	---	La Harpe		4000 BC-AD 400
PALEOINDIAN	---			Before 4000 BC

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is on an eastern terrace of Little Cypress Bayou just southeast of Jefferson, Texas and west of Caddo Lake. Vegetation at the site consists of dense pine forest on the northeast side of FM 134 and a pasture on the southwest side. In 1951, both sides of the road were being cultivated (Miller 1951) The pasture has been artificially terraced for erosion control and to route water to a small pond just northwest of the project right-of-way.

The site was originally described by E. O. Miller (Miller 1951) with Jack Hughes and family in 1951. This description is recorded on a site form on file at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL), the University of Texas at Austin. Miller and Hughes found 618 prehistoric sherds and 1 Indian pipe fragment on the surface. Ms. Hughes found a water bottle, and local informants reported that burials had also been found at the site. Much less cultural material was found during our 1989 test excavations.

During testing in September 1989, a local ranch foreman visited the project and indicated that collectors have found most material 200 to 400 meters east of the right-of-way along the Little Cypress Bayou. Within the right-of-way, surface evidence of the site was sparse due to thick grass cover on the southwest side of the road and a blanket of pine needles in the forest on the northeast side of the road. However, pothunters left their mark in the form of a few small depressions on the northeast side of the road. Their holes were apparently excavated following the March 1989 preliminary test. According to a foreman from a neighboring ranch, the pothunters found very little and gave up. The identity of the pothunters is unknown.

TEST EXCAVATIONS

Field Methods

Test excavation was conducted on both sides of FM 134, with three test units on the northeast side of the road and five test units on the southwest side of the road (Figure 2). A Gradall excavated three trenches on the southwest side of the road. Gradall trenches were not placed on the northeast side of the road because vegetation was too dense to accommodate the Gradall. Also, the detour will be on the southwest side of the roadway. During March 1989 the first three test units (TU-1, TU-2, and TU-3) were excavated and both sides of the road were shovel tested. In September 1989, the remainder of the test units and all of the trenches were excavated. In the latter visit to the site, a grid was established on the southwest side of the road and four of the test units were excavated on this grid and are named for the grid location of their southeast corner.

Another test unit (TU-4) had to be excavated off-grid because of the dense forest growth which limited the extension of the grid to the northeast side of the road. However, all the test units on the northeast side of the road were mapped with a transit so that they could be tied in with the grid. The grid, in turn, was mapped relative to a highway station on the centerline of the existing road.

All of the test units were 1X1 meter square and were dug in 10 cm levels measured from the surface around the edge of each unit. All matrix from the test units was passed through screens consisting of 1/4 inch hardware cloth mesh. The soil was sandy and moist, so that vertical control of the units and screening were relatively easy. Large tree roots were not common below level 2, even in units on the forested side of the road. An arbitrary datum point (Datum A) was established and assigned an elevation of 100 meters. Artifacts found in situ were plotted on a level form and their elevations were measured using a transit and metric stadia rod relative to Datum A. All the test units were excavated until the artifact counts were zero, or had dropped substantially from previous levels. In all cases, the test units were excavated into the lower soil zone, which consisted of a reddish, silty sand.

The trenches also extended into the reddish, silty sand. The Gradall operator dug the trenches by scraping about 5 to 10 cm at a time under the supervision of the staff archaeologist. A smooth-edged bucket, 5 feet wide, was used. The staff archaeologist and other SDHPT personnel examined the floor of each scrape for features and each backdirt pile for artifacts. No features were observed and only a few artifacts were collected from Trenches 2 and 3.

Stratigraphy

Typical stratigraphic profiles are shown in Figure 3. Three soil zones were identified, representing a light brown, sandy A-horizon over a

reddish, silty, alluvial C-horizon. The top two zones are within the A-horizon and consist of light brown sand separated by a gradual transition. The upper zone is slightly darker than the lower zone, because of greater amounts of humus.

The C-horizon consists of reddish silty sand and occurs as an abrupt transition from the lower part of the A-horizon. In general, artifacts were not found within the C-horizon except immediately at its boundary with the A-horizon.

Artifact Descriptions

Historic Debris

A small amount of historic debris was recovered on the surface (exact provenience unknown). This material consists of 1 fragment of porcelain and 1 fragment of stoneware. No historic debris was found in any of the test units, shovel tests, or Gradall trenches.

Debitage

Flakes were relatively infrequent, as can be seen in Table 2. The sample of flakes is too small to draw many conclusions about the flaking activities dominant on this portion of the site. Although the sample is too small for most forms of statistical analysis, most of the flakes are small non-decortication flakes typical of tool resharpening activities rather than of initial lithic reduction or tool-making activities.

Projectile Point

One Perdiz-like arrow point was found (Figure 4) in Test Unit 7 (N473/E500), Level 4. This was the only chipped stone implement found while testing the site and indicates a possible Late Prehistoric component, perhaps in the Late Caddo period.

Mano Fragment

One mano fragment was found in the backdirt of Gradall Trench 3 and its exact vertical provenience is not known. The fragment is made of coarse sandstone.

Anvil ("Nutting") Stone

One anvil stone was found in Test Unit 3, Level 1, and is made of soft, buff colored sandstone. One face of the stone has a central depression which has been ground. The opposite face is convex and may have also been ground, but it is not completely smooth. It is possible that the anvil stone also served as a small mano, at least on the second face.

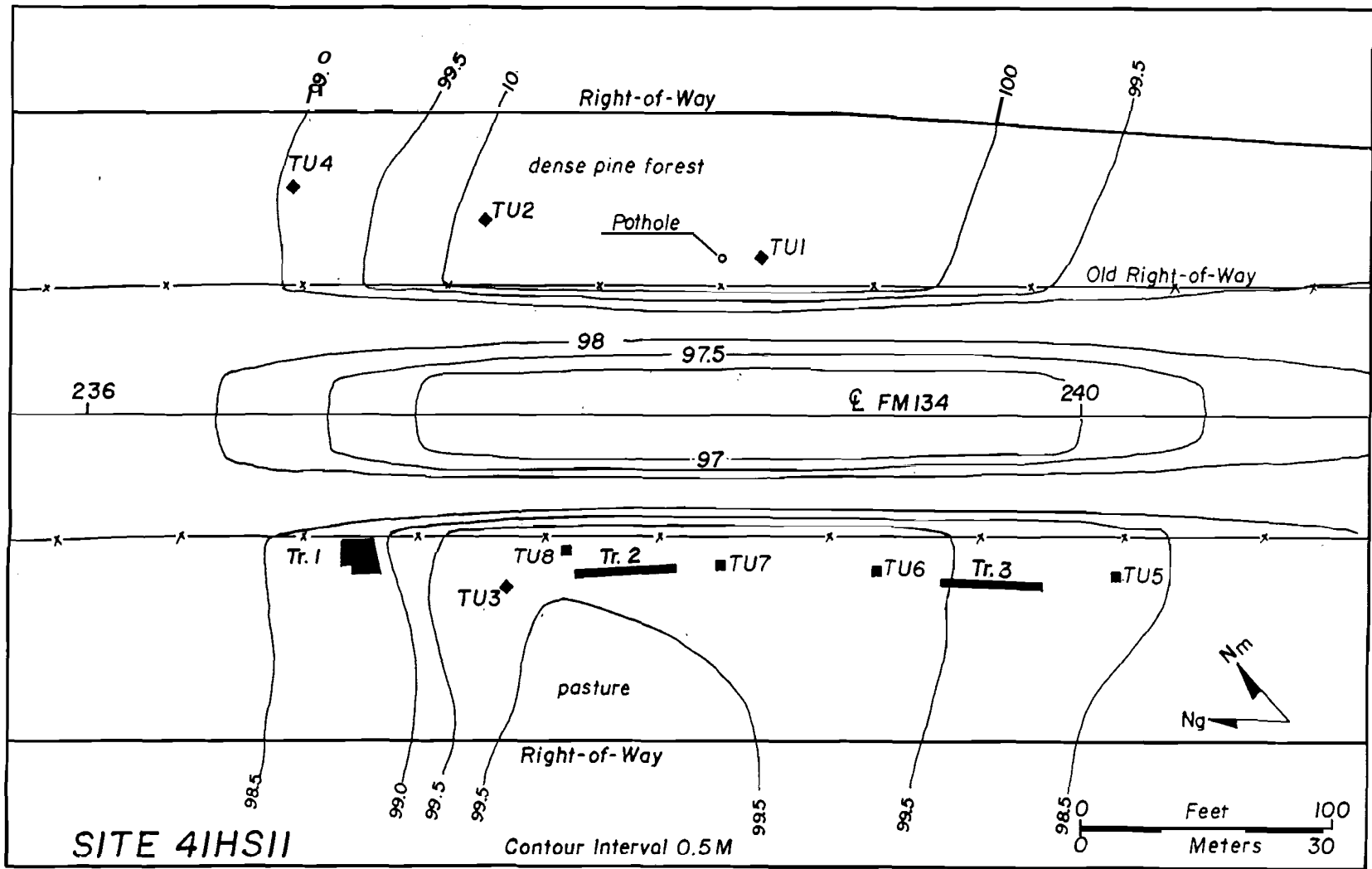


Figure 2. Map of test excavations.

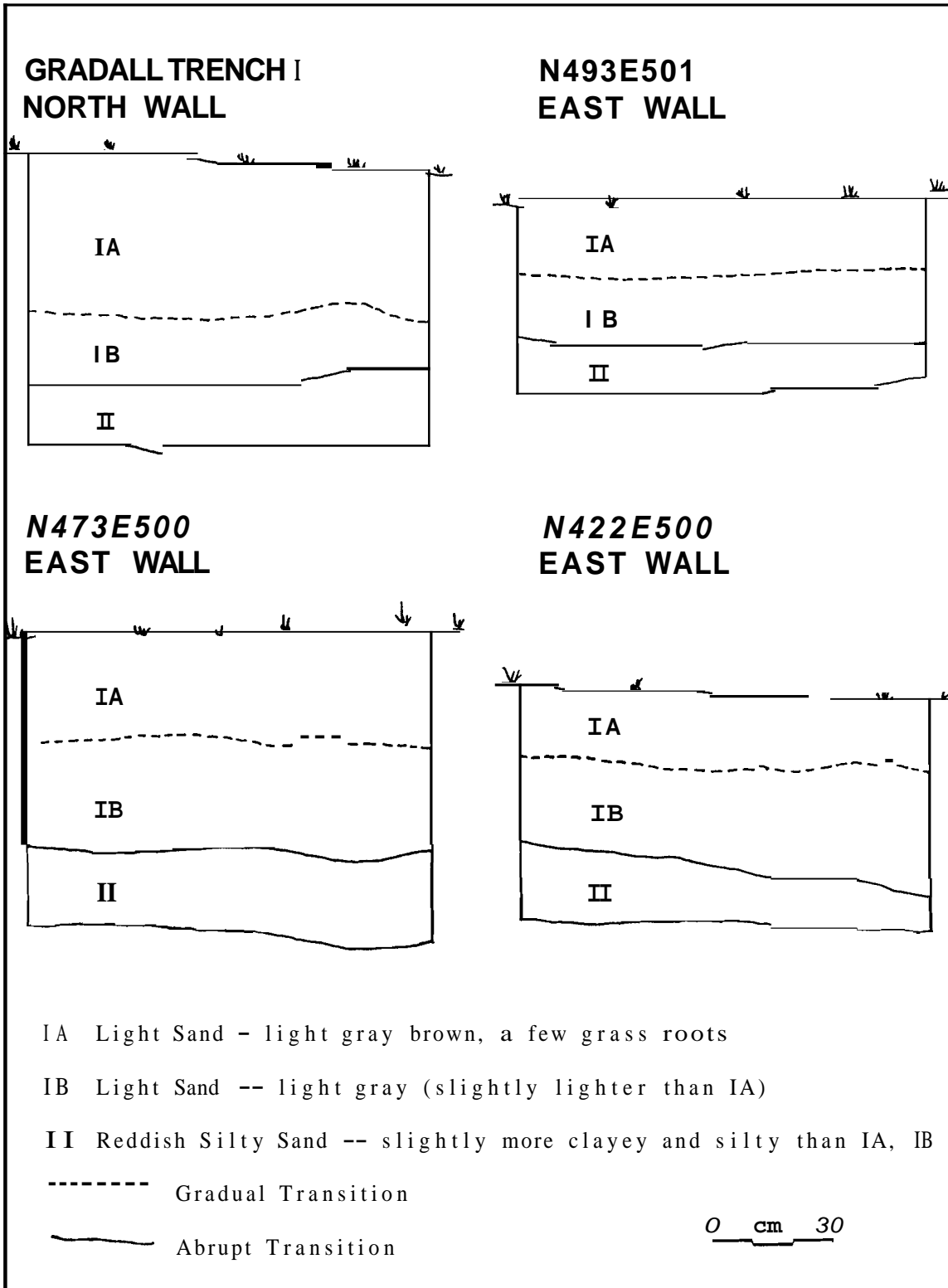


Figure 3. Stratigraphy at 41HS11.

Burned Clay Fragments

Small pieces of burned clay were occasionally found and are summarized in Table 3. Many of these are probably eroded sherds, but are too small and disfigured to identify them as such. Other fragments may represent pieces of daub from structures, but there are no grass impressions visible on any of the fragments, and they are generally too small to make a positive identification.

Prehistoric Pottery: Body Sherds

All the body sherds are summarized in Table 3. Even though they were the most common artifact type, the number of sherds recovered from test excavations was substantially lower than expected based on the high sherd counts recorded by previous investigations at the site. Most of the sherds were tempered with grog and/or bone. None of the sherds are slipped, but a small number of them are decorated.

Decorated body sherds are summarized in Table 4. All the sherds are tempered with grog or a combination of grog and finely crushed bone, and the majority (12) are brushed. Three of the decorated sherds have incised parallel lines. Two sherds are engraved, and one has applique ridges similar to Cass Applique.

Prehistoric Pottery: Rim Sherds

There were also five rim sherds, these are illustrated in Figures 4 and 5. All have been decorated, but the decorations are highly varied among the five sherds. One of these (Figure 5, A) has light punctates with incised horizontal to slightly diagonal lines. The rim is straight with no lipping. Its exterior and core are very dark gray (10YR3/1) and it has a brown to dark brown (10YR4/3) interior. A small amount of crushed bone is visible in the paste.

Another specimen (Figure 5, B) has a light yellowish brown (10YR6/4) paste throughout. Small amounts of bone temper are visible. The sherd has three evenly spaced horizontal ridges below the rim. The rim has a slight lip and is also slightly flared outward.

The third specimen (Figure 5, C) has a yellowish brown (10YR5/4) interior and exterior with a very dark gray (10YR3/1) core. Crushed bone is visible in the paste. The rim has a thin, but pronounced, lip and flares slightly outward. A single row of horizontal punctates just below the lip of the rim. Extending downward from this row and to the right (i.e., counterclockwise), there are two parallel lines of punctates arranged in a semicircular curve.

Table 2. Lithic debitage.

LOT #	Provenience	Level	Primary	Second.	Interior	Shatter
0	Surface		-	-	-	-
GT-2	Trench 2		-	-	-	-
GT-3	Trench 3		-	-	-	-
ST-3	Shovel Test 3		-	-	-	-
ST-4	Shovel Test 4		-	-	-	-
1-A	Test Unit 1	1	1	-	2	-
1-B		2	-	-	2	-
1-C		3	-	-	-	-
2-A	Test Unit 2	1	2	-	2	4
2-B		2	1	-	1	1
2-C		3	-	-	-	-
2-0		4	-	-	1	-
2-E		5	-	-	-	-
3-A	Test Unit 3	1	-	-	-	-
3-B		2	-	-	3	-
3-C		3	-	-	-	-
4-A	Test Unit 4	1	-	-	-	-
4-B		2	-	-	-	-
4-C		3	-	-	-	-
4-D		4	-	-	-	-
4-E		5	-	-	-	-
5-A	Test Unit 5 (N422/E500)	1	-	-	-	-
5-B		2	-	-	-	-
5-C		3	-	-	-	-
5-D		4	-	-	-	-
5-E		5	-	-	-	-
5-F		6	-	-	-	-
6-A	Test Unit 6 (N453/E500)	1	-	-	-	-
6-B		2	-	-	-	-
6-C		3	-	-	1	-
6-D		4	-	-	-	-
6-E		5	-	-	-	-
6-F		6	-	-	-	-
7-A	Test Unit 7 (N473/E500)	1	-	1	-	-
7-B		2	-	-	-	-
7-C		3	-	-	-	-
7-0		4	-	-	-	-
7-E		5	-	-	-	-
7-F		6	-	-	-	-
7-G		7	-	-	-	1
8-A/B	Test Unit 8 (N493/E501)	1 & 2	-	-	-	1
8-C		3	-	-	1	-
8-0		4	-	-	-	-
8-E		5	-	-	-	-

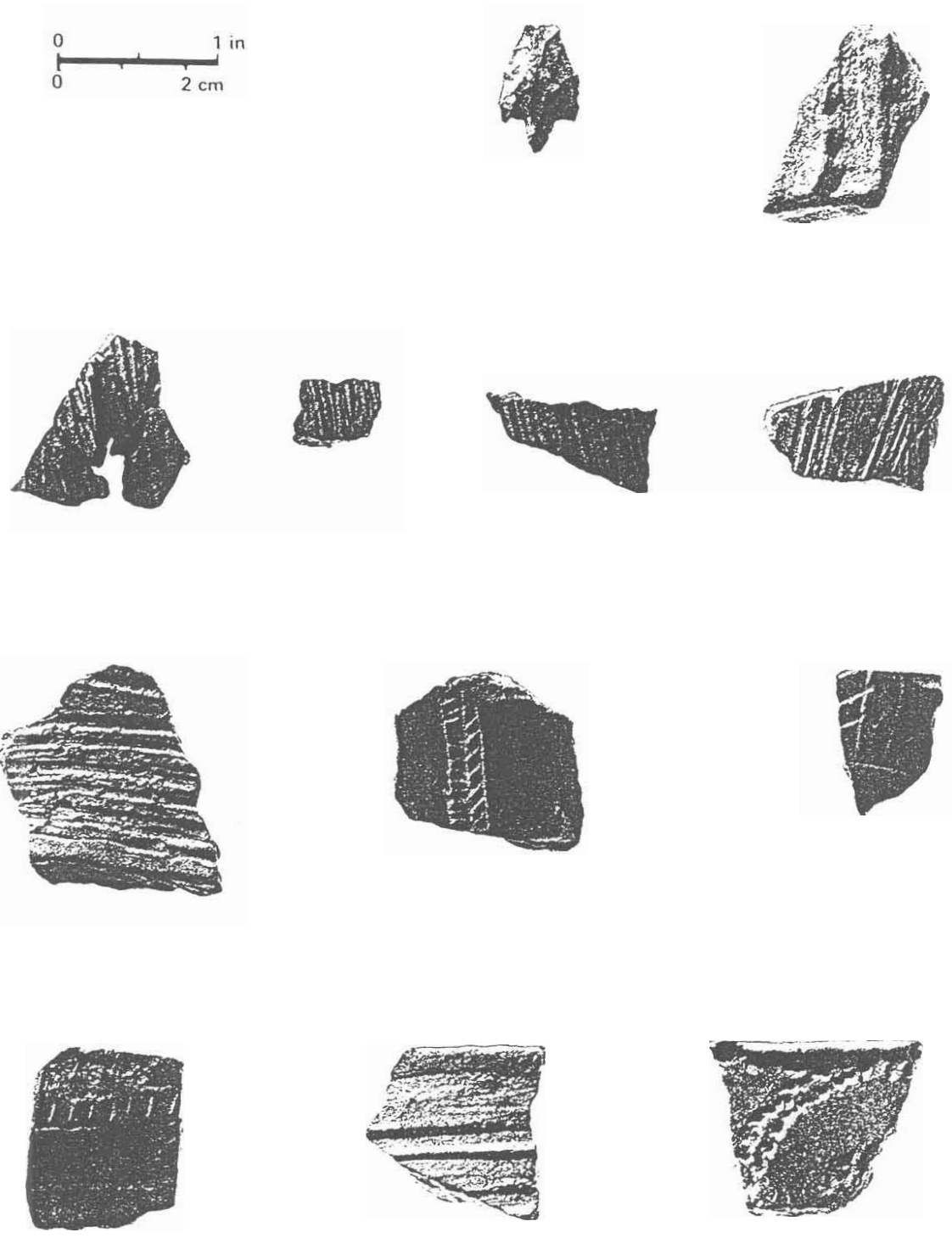


Figure 4. Artifacts from test excavations and surface.

Table 3. Ceramics, burned clay fragments, and historic debris.

LOT#	Provenience	Level	Sherd	Burned Clay	Historic
0	Surface		1	2	2
GT-2	Trench 2		7	2	-
GT-3	Trench 3		1	-	-
ST-3	Shovel Test 3		2	-	-
ST-4	Shovel Test 4		-	-	-
1-A	Test Unit 1	1	12	-	-
1-B		2	7	1	-
1-C		3	-	-	-
2-A	Test Unit 2	1	18	6	-
2-B		2	9	4	-
2-C		3	12	5	-
2-D		4	-	-	-
2-E		5	6	2	-
3-A	Test Unit 3	1	8	-	-
3-B		2	7	1	-
3-C		3	3	7	-
4-A	Test Unit 4	1	1	-	-
4-B		2	2	-	-
4-C		3	-	-	-
4-D		4	-	-	-
4-E		5	-	-	-
5-A	Test Unit 5 (N422/E500)	1	-	-	-
5-B		2	1	-	-
5-C		3-6	-	-	-
5-D		4	-	-	-
5-E		5	-	-	-
5-F		6	-	-	-
6-A	Test Unit 6 (N453/E500)	1	1	2	-
6-B		2	1	2	-
6-C		3	6	18	-
6-D		4	10	13	-
6-E		5	3	8	-
6-F		6	1	1	-
7-A	Test Unit 7 (N473/E500)	1	7	-	-
7-B		2	2	-	-
7-C		3	2	-	-
7-D		4	15	11	-
7-E		5	14	9	-
7-F		6	8	2	-
7-G		7	-	5	-
8-A/B	Test Unit 8 (N493/E501)	1 & 2	18	-	-
8-C		3	-	1	-
8-D		4	4	-	-
8-E		5	-	-	-

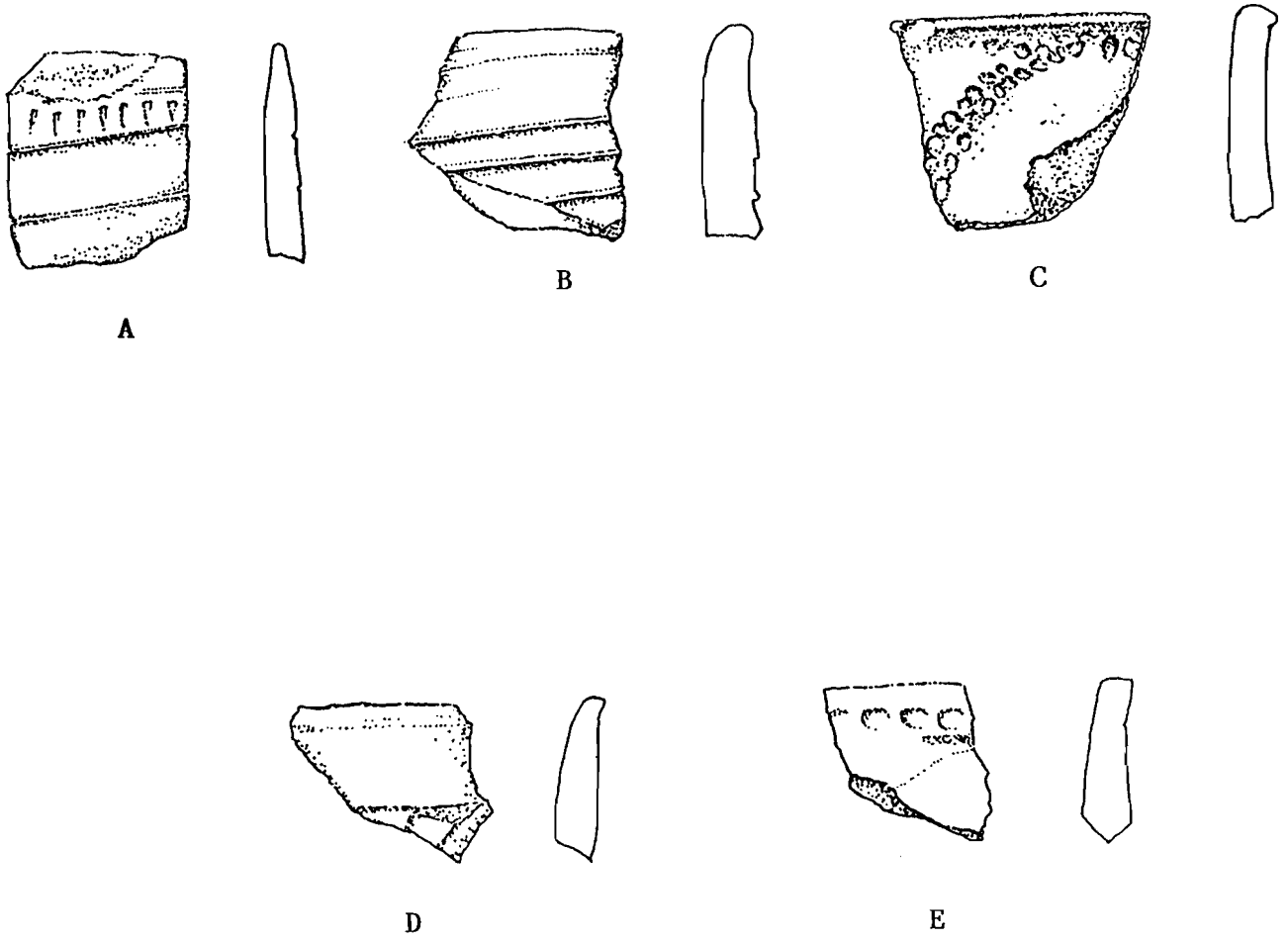


Figure 5. Rim sherds from test excavations.

The fourth specimen (Figure 5, D) has a yellowish brown (10YR5/4) exterior with a very dark gray (10YR3/1) core and interior. Tempering material appears to be sand and finely crushed grog. There is a very slight lip and engraved cross-hatching occurs below the rim.

The fifth specimen (Figure 5, E) has a yellowish brown (10YR5/4) exterior, dark grayish brown (10YR4/2) core, and a very dark grayish brown interior (10YR3/2). There is no apparent temper visible. The rim has a slight lip. A single row of small punctates occur just below the bottom edge of the lip.

Table 4. Decorated body sherds.

LOT #	Provenience	Level	Brushed	Incised	Engraved	Applique
GT-2 ST-3	Trench 2 Shovel Test 3		1 2	- -	- -	- -
2-C 2-E	Test Unit 2	3 5	2 -	1 -	- -	- 1
6-D	Test Unit 6	4	2	-	1	-
7-C 7-D 7-E	Test Unit 7	3 4 5	1 1 3	- 1 -	- - -	- - -
8-A/B	Test Unit 8	1 & 2	2	-	1	-

CONCLUSIONS

Small amounts of cultural material were found during testing. When compared to the relatively high artifact counts described by Miller and Hughes in the 1950s, it appears that the proposed right-of-way will affect a portion of the site where very little prehistoric activity took place. The site as recorded in 1951 covers a broad area on both sides of FM 134. Based on discussions with a ranch foreman, the main part of the site is probably closer to the creek and as far as 200 to 400 meters east of the project area.

Test excavations and trenching were concentrated on the southwest side of the road, where there will be a temporary detour easement. No features were found and the only tools found include one arrow point, one mano fragment, and one anvil stone.

The site appears to be a Caddoan campsite with components dating to the Early and Middle (Whelan Phase) Caddoan periods. The presence of the arrow point may also indicate a Late Caddo period as well. Some of the pottery observed at the site may indicate an eastward influence toward present-day Louisiana.

Based on the evidence from this test, those portions of the site within the right-of-way are not considered eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. No further investigations appear to be warranted.

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