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## Archeological Survey and Survey-Level Testing for the Proposed Juan Seguin Park Plaza Project, Harris County, Texas

### Authors

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# **Archeological Survey and Survey-Level Testing for the Proposed Juan Seguin Park Plaza Project, Harris County, Texas**

*Commissioned by*

**Harris County Precinct 2**

*Prepared by*

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Texas Antiquities Permit Number 5745

November, 2010

## ABSTRACT

J. K. Wagner and Company, Inc. was retained by Harris County Precinct 2 to provide archeological investigations and historic research for the proposed Juan Seguin Park Plaza Project. The project area is owned by Harris County, and the project will be financed with county funds. The project will consist of new construction to update and modify the existing park.

The proposed Juan Seguin Park Plaza Project area is located on the west side of Texas Highway 134 at the south Lynchburg Ferry landing in east Harris County, Texas, and is approximately two acres in size. As the investigation revealed, the entire project area was apparently buried to a height above surrounding grades of about six to eight feet by the addition of fill.

On September 4, 2010, J. K. Wagner and Company, Inc. conducted an archeological survey with backhoe trenching under the auspices of Texas Antiquities Permit Number 5745. The entire site was subjected to pedestrian survey, and six backhoe trenches were excavated to six to eight feet below existing grade. All backhoe trenches revealed multiple layers of modern fill that included materials such as concrete rubble, asphalt chunks, metal and plastic water pipe segments, and other debris. No evidence of pre-1870s artifacts or features of the Historic period, or of prehistoric or aboriginal sites was encountered. Nothing was collected or curated.

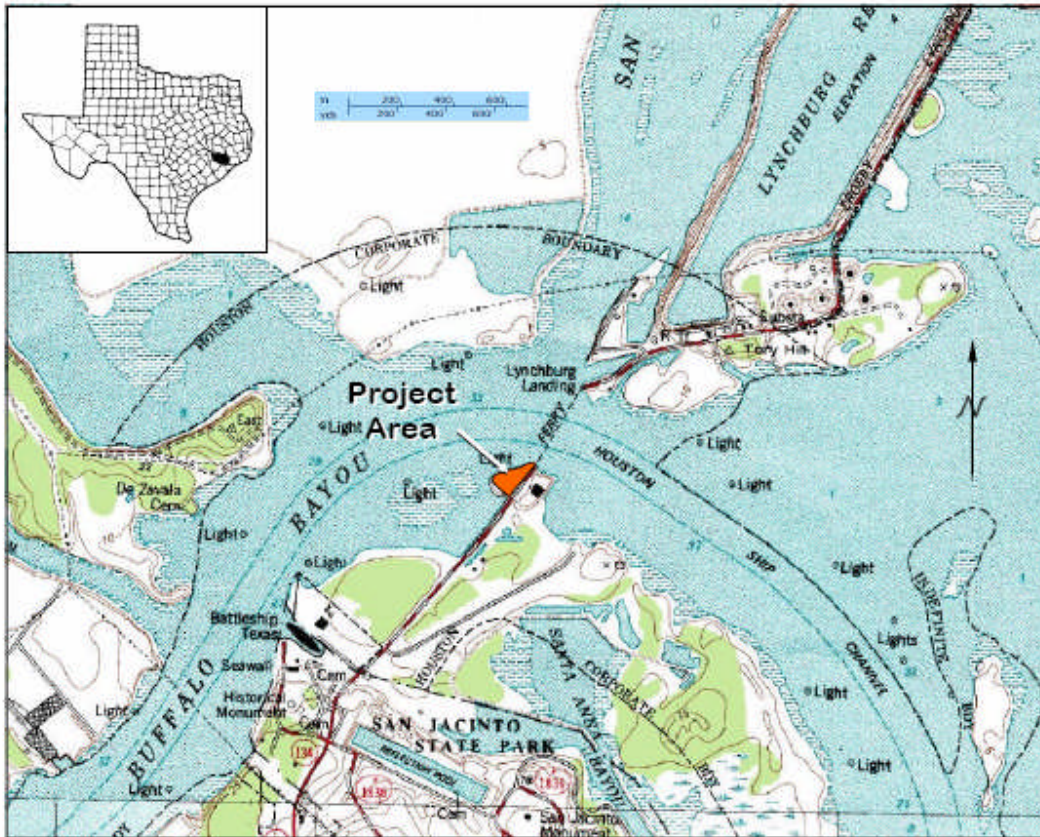
Based on those findings, J. K. Wagner and Company, Inc. believes that the area investigated likely contains no cultural evidence or resources worthy of further investigation or eligible for land marking at the local, state, or national levels. Further, J. K. Wagner and Company, Inc. recommends that the proposed project should proceed without further cultural resource investigation. However, if areas outside of those subjected to backhoe trenching in the initial investigation will be impacted deeper than six feet below current grade, those areas should be examined prior to impact.

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## SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

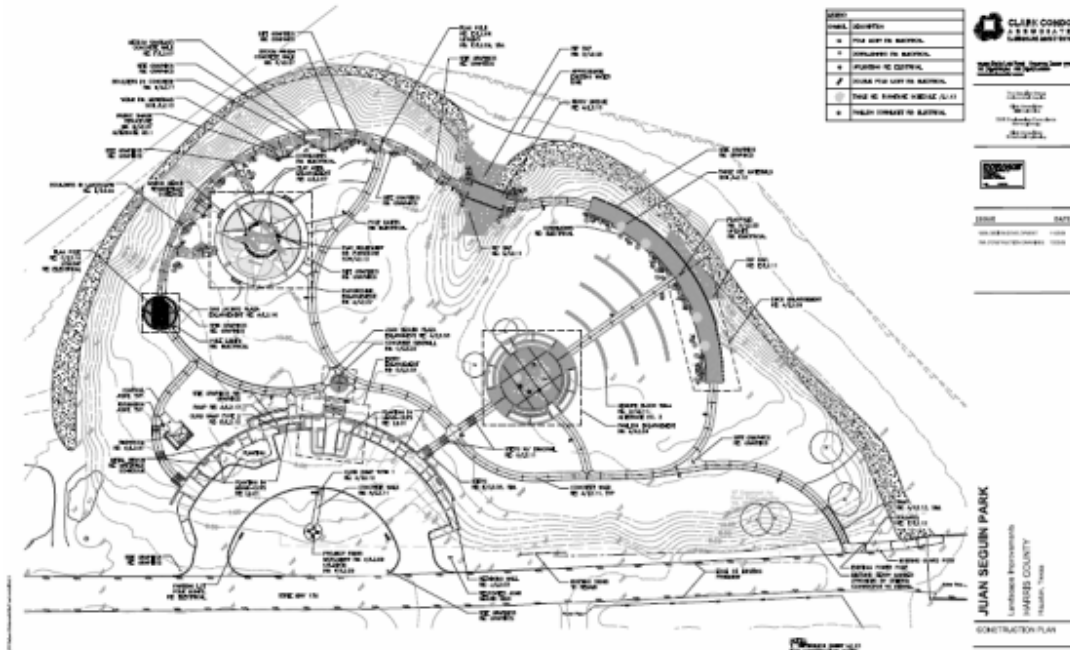
Harris County Precinct 2 retained J. K. Wagner & Company, Inc. (JKWCO) to conduct an archeological survey and historic research for the proposed Juan Seguin Park Plaza Project (project). The project area is approximately two acres in size and is located on the west side of Texas Highway 134 at the south Lynchburg Ferry landing in east Harris County, Texas (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Project Area (in orange) as plotted on *Highlands Texas*, United States Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic map section. Inset shows location of Harris County in Texas.**

Since the project will be carried out on Harris County property and Harris County funds will finance the project, archeological investigations were undertaken to satisfy the requirements of the Antiquities Code of Texas and were conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit 5745.

Harris County proposes upgrades to the existing park facilities that may include construction of monuments, plazas, a ferry boat bridge, railings, play equipment, markers, subsurface foundations, parking areas, improved perimeter roadways, walkways, towers, a boardwalk, bridge, steps, awnings, and other modifications, some of which may require piers and/or other subsurface support (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. (Map Drawn February, 2010)**

The permit scope of work included visual surface inspection, excavation of not less than about six to eight shovel tests nor more than about 18 to 24 shovel tests throughout the project area, if feasible and warranted. At the option of the Principal Investigator (PI), and based on site conditions encountered during fieldwork, the investigations could include limited backhoe scraping and/or random or systematic metal detection. Any portions of archeological sites 41HR526 and 41HR808 found within the project area were to be revisited and reassessed.

Mark B. Wagner served as the general Project Manager. Herbert G. Uecker served as archeological PI for the project; Nancy Porter served as Project Archeologist and primary report author; and Janet K. Wagner conducted historic research for the endeavor and wrote the historic overview portion of this document. Bobby McKinney and Mark Wiggins provided metal detection services, and Carol Bookout provided research assistance. Jack Rodriguez from Harris County Precinct 2 served as liaison between JKWCO and the county during all phases of the project, and JKWCO wishes to acknowledge his invaluable assistance. Field work was carried out on September 4, 2010.

This document's subdivisions present the following information: Section 2 provides the environmental setting for the project area. Section 3 presents the research design, or scope of work, as submitted to the Texas Historical Commission (THC) at the time of the application for a

Texas Antiquities Permit along with modifications made to the scope during the investigations. Section 4 provides information regarding previous archeological investigations conducted on the project site and in the general vicinity of the project area. Section 5 presents the results of investigations. Section 6 provides conclusions and recommendations based on the results of the investigations, and Section 7 provides a list of the references cited within the text.



## SECTION 2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

### 2.1 PHYSICAL SETTING

The project area is located on the Gulf Coastal Plain and is underlain by the Pleistocene aged Beaumont geologic formation (Hayes and Kennedy 19). The approximately two acre tract is located on a small peninsula that extends north into Buffalo Bayou (Houston Ship Channel) and that has been disturbed by natural agents including flooding, shore erosion from wave action, and profound subsidence. Prior to development, the area would have been described as coastal prairie.

The temperature on the upper Texas Gulf Coastal Plain and eastern Harris County is described as humid subtropical. The summers are hot and humid, and the winters are usually cool but not cold. Due to the close proximity to the Gulf of Mexico, humidity and temperature variations are less than inland areas to the west. During the summer months, temperatures may occasionally reach the one hundred degree mark. Freezes may occur during the winter months but are relatively rare and short-lived. The first fall median freeze/frost date is near to November 20; the last spring median freeze/frost is around February 4 (NOAA 2010).

Rainfall along the upper Texas Coast and in the project area averages 46-50 inches per year, with a range generally between 30 and 65 inches per year. Mid to late summer is usually the driest period of the year. Late summer and early fall may produce higher rainfall amounts (due to tropical storms or hurricanes) as well as late winter to early spring. Note that these are averages only and that there is great deal of variation in rainfall throughout the year. Additionally, weather phenomena known as “*El Niño*” and “*La Niña*” may disrupt temperature and rainfall averages in the years these occur. Recently identified and proven weather altering events, *El Niño* and *La Niña*'s have probably occurred throughout history (NOAA 2010).

### 2.3 VEGETATION

The natural vegetation in the project area prior to human intervention would have predominantly included maritime coastal prairie grasses such as bluestem (*Schizachyrium* spp. and *Andropogon* spp.), switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*), eastern gamagrass (*Tripsacum dactyloides*) *Paspalum* spp. and Indian grasses (*Sorghastrum* spp.) (Gould 1975). Buffalo Bayou to the west supported a riparian corridor of live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), water oak (*Q. nigra*), red mulberry (*Morus rubra*), southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), pecan (*Carya illinoensis*), and yaupon. Pine (*Pinus* spp.), sweetgum (*Liquidamber styraciflua*) and southern prickly ash (*Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*) grew on the more sandy areas. Understory vegetation included woody species such as greenbrier (*Smilax* spp.), yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*), and other grasses and forbs. Interspersed throughout the project area were mottes, of live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) and juniper (*Juniperus virginiana*). The tidal habitats of the upper Galveston Bay system to the east of the South Plaza site supported a variety of cord grasses (*Spartina* spp.), reeds (*Phragmites* spp.), and bulrushes (*Scirpus* spp.) (Fisher et al. 1972; Gadus and Howard 1990; Takac, 2000; White and Paine 1992).

## 2.4 FAUNA

### Mammals

In the past, tallgrass prairies were suitable habitat for buffalo (Bison). A small herd of buffalo was reported around part of Galveston Bay as late as 1841. In the past the area also supported black bear (*Ursus americanus*), cougar (*Felis concolor*), red wolf (*Canis rufus*), and gray wolf (*Canis lupus*). Today, smaller mammals such as white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), eastern spotted skunk (*Spilogale putorius*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), rabbits (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), fox squirrel (*S. niger*), rats (*Sigmodon spp.*), and other rodents occupy the area (Davis and Schmidly, 1994).

### Avifauna

Bird species found in the prairie/woodland habitats of the area have remained relatively unchanged over several centuries with a few exceptions. The tallgrass prairie was ideal habitat for wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) and the endangered Attwater's prairie chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*), but today both are extirpated from the area due to human expansion and industrialization and loss of sustainable habitat (Oberholser 1974). Prairie grasses are also favored by quail (*Colinus virginianus*), several species of dove (*Columbidae spp.*), meadowlarks (*Stumella spp.*), and wintering sparrows (*Ammodramus spp.*). Primarily in the winter, hawks (*Accipitrinae spp.*) and falcons (*Tercel spp.*) hunt in all habitats for small birds and rodents. Waterbirds such as wood storks (*Mycteria americana*), members of the Ardeidace family such as herons and egrets favor fresh and brackish water pools and shorelines. The live oak, hackberry and mulberry trees provide a rest stop and food for migrant passerines such as warblers (*Passeriformes*), buntings (*Emberiza*), orioles (*Oriolidae*), tanagers (*Thraupidae*), grosbeaks (*Passeroidea*), and flycatchers (*Tyrannidae*).

## 2.5 SOILS

The Soil Survey of Harris County (Wheeler 1976) notes the project area soils as Ijam soils which are generally associated with clayey sediment dredged or pumped from the floor of rivers or bayous during the construction or maintenance of a local waterway. If present on the site, Ijam soils will have zero to one percent slopes with a very firm, moderately alkaline, dark-gray-clay surface about eight inches thick over very firm, moderately alkaline, gray clay with mottles of yellowish brown clay and a few shell fragments up to about 60 inches thick.

## SECTION 3 SCOPE OF WORK

The following scope of work was included as an attachment to the Texas Antiquities Permit application form submitted to the THC in August, 2010.

### *Visual Surface Inspection and Survey-Level Subsurface Testing*

Considering the amount of precipitation that has recently occurred in the vicinity, it is assumed for purposes of developing this scope of work that average ground surface visibility will probably be less than 30 percent at the time of fieldwork. Therefore this scope is predicated on the notion that the primary means of investigation during fieldwork will likely have to be subsurface testing, and the scope includes excavation of not less than about 6–8 shovel tests, nor more than about 18–24 shovel tests throughout the project area, if warranted and feasible based on depth of deposits, soil types, and disturbances, presence or absence of large subsurface debris (e.g., dense deposits of modern concrete or asphalt rubble, slab remnants, etc.), contaminants, or other impediments encountered during fieldwork, and whether or not evidence of archeological sites 41HR526 or 41HR808 is found and site boundaries must be traced by shovel testing. Each shovel test will be between about 30 and 40 centimeters in diameter, excavated in approximate 20-centimeter-thick unit levels, with average depths targeting about one meter, but actual depths will be contingent on findings of cultural evidence, practical limits, and/or encountering bedrock or subsoils believed too old to contain cultural evidence (such as Beaumont or Lissie clay). Depending on moisture content, density, and texture, all excavated matrix will be screened through quarter-inch-mesh hardware cloth or troweled through and carefully examined for the presence or absence of cultural evidence.

### *Optional Initial Testing*

At the option of the Principal Investigator based on site conditions encountered during fieldwork and potential to optimize methods and results of the initial investigation, limited backhoe scraping may be employed, either in lieu of, or in addition to visual surface inspection and shovel testing. The exact number, size and depth of any backhoe scrapes employed will be determined by the Principal Investigator, but if scrapes are used in lieu of shovel testing, a minimum of about 8–10 scrapes will be performed. Each scrape is planned to be about 4-6 feet by 30-36 inches wide in plan dimensions and will be excavated in approximate 15-20 centimeter unit-levels to depths of at least 1-1.5 meters, depending on soil conditions, estimated age, and cultural content encountered. If feasible, representative samples of soil from each unit-level will be screened through quarter-inch-mesh hardware cloth. If screening is not feasible, samples will be troweled through and carefully examined for the presence or absence of cultural evidence. Samples for screening from each unit-level will average about 10-20 shovels-full of excavated matrix.

### *Metal Detection*

If feasible and warranted, at the Principal Investigator's option random or systematic metal detection on ~ 1.5-3.0 m transect intervals in selected surface zones or scans of excavated soils might be done. Depth sensitivity for all metal detecting would be about 40 cm below the surface.

### *Collection, Analysis, Conservation, and Curation or Discard of Artifacts*

Representative samples of small, collectable, temporally-diagnostic or unique artifacts found, and which the Principal Investigator or Project Archeologist believes originated during prehistory or prior to about 1870 during the Historic period, or which appear to be associated historically or archeologically with the San Jacinto town site or ferry, or with other discrete pre-1870 archeological resources found, or with discrete post-1870 evidence, periods, traditions, or cultures will be provenienced and collected, processed in the laboratory, analyzed, and/or curated or discarded. Other artifacts will not be collected or curated.

Laboratory processing and analysis of all collected artifacts will be directed by the Principal Investigator and performed by the Laboratory Technician. It will consist of cleaning, sorting, inventory, classification, sourcing and age estimation, labeling, and packaging artifacts for interpretation and curation by standard practices acceptable to the THC and the selected curation facility. Any artifacts collected but subsequently determined by the Principal Investigator (with concurrence of the THC and the project sponsor) to have no contextual, intrinsic, or research value will be discarded according to Chapter 26 Rules of Practice and Procedure for the Antiquities Code of Texas, 26.27 (f)(2)(B): "Objects that lack historical, cultural, or scientific value."

Artifacts collected will be held during the field work, laboratory analysis, and report preparation at the offices of JKWCO. Any permanent curation required by the THC will be at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory of the University of Texas at Austin, the Archeology Laboratory of the Center for Archaeological Studies at Texas State University, or at any other curational facility or institution approved by the THC.

### *Revisit/Reassessment of Archeological Sites 41HR526 and 41HR808 and Recording of New Sites*

To the extent feasible and warranted based on patterns of finds of archeological evidence within the project area, and on perceived degree of integrity and preservation of such evidence, an attempt will be made to make current estimates of the extent, boundaries, and degree of preservation, integrity, and research potential of these two previously recorded sites, which the Atlas indicated on August 26, 2010, to be partly within the project area. If evidence of these sites is found and is sufficient in the Principal Investigator's judgment to warrant preparation and submittal to the TARL and the THC of revised site forms, same will be so prepared and submitted. If substantive evidence of new sites is found, the new sites will be subjected to field mapping and recording, and trinomial registration with the TARL and the THC.

### *Interpretation of Findings and Reporting*

In cases in which archeological artifacts found can be convincingly associated with properties and/or individuals identified in the archival research, the Project Historian will collaborate with the Principal Investigator to interpret and relate the archeological data to the archival and historical contexts identified.

Any interim reports produced could be in letter form, but comprehensive draft and final reporting will be done according to Council of Texas Archeologists guidelines. The detailed archival and historical background research and reporting already done by JKWCO will be used as the primary basis for the background sections of the reports of findings. Upon completion all reports will be submitted to the THC for review and comment.

### **3.1 MODIFICATIONS TO THE SCOPE OF WORK**

Upon arrival at the project site, JKWCO staff discovered that the entire project area appeared to have been elevated years ago above surrounding roads and lands by the addition of approximately six to eight feet of modern fill. Therefore, shovel testing was abandoned altogether and subsurface testing was changed from shallow backhoe scrapes to deep backhoe trenching.

## SECTION 4 ARCHEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH FOR THE PROJECT AREA

### 4.1 PREVIOUS ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AND FINDINGS

According to the Texas Archeological Sites Atlas (atlas), two previously recorded sites, 41HR526 and 41HR808, are recorded, at least partially, within the project boundary. Both sites were investigated at the survey level. Site 41HR526 is the historic townsite of San Jacinto, founded in 1829. The San Jacinto townsite was investigated in 1971 (Frank Hole), 1982, and 1983 and formally recorded in 1984 by THC archeologists Peggy Leshikar and Paul White. Artifacts collected in conjunction with the 1984 investigations include brick, brownware, petrified bone, and ceramicware. Leshikar and White recommended further documentation and possible testing for the site.

Site 41HR808, a prehistoric shell midden, was recorded in 1997 by C.R. Ebersole of the Houston Archeological Society during the Galveston Bay Archaeological Survey. The State of Texas Archeological Site Data Form for 41HR808 notes that an estimated 50 feet of the site has been lost to dredging and erosion, that there has been much subsidence in the site area, and that the research value of the site is “small” (poor). Ebersole does, however, recommend shovel testing to assess for buried shell lenses.

Some of the earliest recorded investigations in the vicinity of the project area were conducted by Wayne B. Neyland between March 1957 and December 1959. These investigations concentrated on the southeastern bank of Buffalo Bayou immediately upstream of the project area and recorded a number of prehistoric and historic sites. For a detailed description of Neyland’s work and the sites he recorded along with a discussion of the current (2000) landscape and geomorphology of the area of Neyland’s work, please see Chapters 5 and 7 of *Reassessment of Ten Archeological Sites Along the Houston Ship Channel – Morgan’s Point to Buffalo Bayou, Harris County, Texas*, Studies in Archeology 38, Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (Takac et al. 2000). In this same document, a discussion of early Cultural Resource Management (CRM) surveys in the general project area is likewise presented in Chapter 5.

In 1971 and 1972, the Coastal Industrial Water Authority commissioned a historical and archeological study of portions of the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site (SJBSHS), approximately three fourths of a mile south of the current project area, in advance of the emplacement of three water pipelines, each nine feet in diameter (TAC Permit Number 11). Those investigations represent some of the earliest archeological investigations conducted within the SJBSHS. Four locations, immediately west of the SJBSHS Reflection Pool and east of State Highway 134 (roughly paralleling State Highway 134), were subjected to excavation with historic artifacts recovered from a zone of dredge spoil overlying the original surface. No archeological sites were recorded (Cartier and Hole 1972).

In 2000, the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) conducted the reassessment of ten archeological sites along the Houston Ship Channel (HSC) from Morgan's Point to Buffalo Bayou. The reassessment, preceded by extensive historical research, included pedestrian survey, shovel probes and tests, auger probes, and test excavation units. The researchers determined that five of the sites were eroded, subsided or natural accumulations of redeposited cultural material erroneously recorded as intact and that none were eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. Four of the sites were not located due to subsidence; however, a small upslope extension of one of the four (41HR121) was discovered and determined to be NRHP eligible. A single historic site (41HR576) was relocated and partially assessed; however, no NRHP eligibility determination was made. TARL recommended additional excavation at 41HR121, additional archival and documentary investigations at 41HR576, and a comprehensive study of existing ceramic data available in collections from now-destroyed sites along the HSC (Takac et al. 2000).

## 4.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Arthur McCormick received a league of land surveyed on the south side of the San Jacinto River at its junction with Buffalo Bayou from the Mexican Government about 1824. McCormick, his wife Margaret "Peggy", and two sons, John and Michael, set up their residence on a lake located on the east side of the League, making their living by raising livestock and farming. The elder McCormick traveled to San Felipe in 1825 and drowned while crossing Buffalo Bayou at Joel Wheaton's old place (western part of Harris County now near Highway 6, south of IH-10). The widow McCormick continued farming and raising cattle on the land with the assistance of her sons. One son, John, died at an early age. The other son, Michael, lived to become a boat captain on Buffalo Bayou. Many years later, Michael slipped off his boat and drowned in Buffalo Bayou.

The original Town site of San Jacinto was laid off by Nathaniel Lynch on land purchased from Peggy McCormick in 1829-30 when Lynch began a ferry service between the northeastern peninsula and the south bank at the confluence of the two rivers.

After Nathaniel Lynch began operation of his ferry from the newly founded towns of Lynchburg and San Jacinto, a second ferry linking the De Zavala labor to the west on Buffalo Bayou to the town of San Jacinto began operation. In 1837, after the Battle of San Jacinto, the town of San Jacinto began to expand and grow. A town plan was recorded in 1845. Nathaniel Lynch died in 1837 and his heirs took up the lot sales of both Lynchburg and San Jacinto.

The town of San Jacinto prospered up through the 1850s with shipyards, mills, shops, warehouses and a courthouse annex for Harris County. The growth of shipping on the bayous and rivers contributed to the growth of the town of San Jacinto, as well as Lynchburg. Oliver Ames, the silver magnate of Boston, Mass. and founder of the Boston Back Bay Society, invested in local shipyards and sawmills in the town through his Texas agents, also purchasing large tracts of land in the McCormick and adjacent George Ross Survey. Oliver Ames purchased land rights from the widow McCormick. He and his Texas agents were known as the "Northern Syndicate" around Harris County. Oliver Ames' interests extended into banking, silver mines, shovel works, town building and politics at that time.

The shipyards and sawmills were located on the western side of the McCormick League and partially in the western portion of the town of San Jacinto fronting on Buffalo Bayou just southwest of the De Zavala Ferry Landing. The De Zavala Ferry crossed Buffalo Bayou to land at the old De Zavala home site north of the mouth of Carpenter's Bayou. The Lynchburg Ferry crossed the San Jacinto River just below the confluence of the river with Buffalo Bayou.

The majority of the activity of the McCormick League centered around the town of San Jacinto and the nearby battleground where Texas won its independence. In 1894, the State of Texas became interested in purchasing tracts of land on the McCormick League for a memorial to the Battle of San Jacinto. A monument with a reflecting pool was constructed east of the San Jacinto Veteran's graveyard. A museum was added to display the collection of the Harris County Historical Society and the many old Texans who donated memorabilia to the new museum. The monument was constructed on land purchased especially for a park, the dedication being held on 12 July 1936. A monument for masons was dedicated near the site of the old town of San Jacinto on 22 April 1936.

The Harrisburg to Lynchburg Road that skirted the south side of Buffalo Bayou just inside the riparian timber line passed the sawmill and shipyard properties, then turned northeast to enter the town of San Jacinto, ending at the south Lynchburg Ferry Landing. The road was the town's main street. Steamers, docking at least twice daily at San Jacinto in 1850, brought mail and passengers to the town. Barges and flatboats carried dressed lumber and cotton to Houston and Galveston from the 1840s until the turn of the century.

Beginning in 1855 and continuing through 1900, excursion steamers advertised special trips to the San Jacinto Battleground each spring on the anniversary date, 21 April. The 1868, baseball games and barbecue were the celebration of the day. The April 21st game was the first championship game held in Texas (Daily Houston Telegraph: 23 April 1868). Granite boulders to mark the "ten historic spots on the ground" relating to the battle were placed on 21 March 1915 (Houston Post even date). In 1922, the Arabia Shrine Temple took the Harris County orphans to the San Jacinto Battleground for a picnic on 6 May. Excursion boats, bringing sightseers to the Battle of San Jacinto site every 21 April, docked on the Buffalo Bayou side just south of the shipyards and sometimes at the shipyard docks. Passengers frequently attended events such as dress balls and picnics held nearby. The balls, held by Houston and Galveston promoters, were by invitation only. Archeological findings reflect that picnickers on the monument grounds were served raw oysters and champagne with snacks on hotel tableware.

An Inn, known as the San Jacinto Inn, served guests seafood and operated during the latter part of the twentieth century on part of the old San Jacinto Town site. The Battleship "Texas" was brought to a mooring for public display, southwest of the old Town site and south of the old De Zavala Ferry Landing.

The old town of San Jacinto saw a decline in business during the latter 25 years of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. Three hurricanes leveled San Jacinto with storm surges in 1875, 1900, and 1915. Railroads, between Galveston, Beaumont and Houston took what little business was left after the hurricanes. After 1915, the town turned into little more than a fishing camp with buildings in a state of ruin. Following the Great War, World War I, a new San Jacinto town was platted on the west line of the McCormick league extending across the line and into the George Ross Survey to the west. The plat was about three quarters of



a mile south of the old town. Even though streets were graded, only a few property sales occurred and only one structure was built on a lot. The plat of the town was rescinded by 1929. Harris County took over the operation of the Lynchburg Ferry in 1890 and continues to operate the facility in 2010.

It should be noted, that after 1837, many of the old residents of Lynchburg, including the Lynch heirs, moved to the old town of San Jacinto on the south side of the channel.

From about 1837 until his death in June 1842, Benjamin Lynch operated the San Jacinto to Lynchburg Ferry and the Ferry from De Zavala's landing to San Jacinto. Benjamin Lynch inherited 800 acres on Carpenter's Bayou and a ferry boat Nathaniel Lynch had purchased from Luke Moore up river. The last De Zavala Ferry in service was a small side-wheeler. The vessel had a shaft across the middle of the barge with motorized paddles that propelled the boat across the channel. Service ended during 1931.

Retail buildings were constructed in the town by H. Reisner, H. G. Runnels and M. T. Rodgers between 1845 and 1846. Warehouses and storehouses were constructed by John J. Lynch and the widow of Nathaniel Lynch between 1845 and 1853. The Sampson Lodge also used the San Jacinto town site for a meeting hall for several years. Residences were constructed in the 1840s by Margaret Guest, Adam Smith, Lydian and John J. Lynch, William Thompson, Frances Hardin (widow re-married of Nathaniel Lynch), Hiram W. Brown, Isabel and Charles Graves, Thomas and Elvira Perkins, S. A. Cheveral, William and Sallie Campbell, Wilson Bell, F. W. Miller, J. W. Cook, and Sandy and Darcus McCauley.

Commercial industrial construction included the Bowman, Hardin & Brown Wharf, the Courthouse Square, the San Jacinto School, the McCormick/Ames/Sandow Mill Tract, Houston Flour Mills, the William Campbell Sawmill and the Methodist Episcopal Church of U.S.A.

Macomb & George Lewis were shipwrights on Buffalo Bayou at the west end of the San Jacinto town tract, operating next to the De Zavala Ferry. The company recorded \$1000 investments in the operation on 1 June 1850, having milled 20 million feet of lumber with hand-driven machinery. The mill employed three workers and turned out two schooners per year for combined value of \$5000. On 3 November 1850, Louis Macomb was listed in the census as a 26 year old shipbuilding from Ohio with a personal value of \$3,000. Macomb was boarding with Elizabeth Gaffield at the time. George Lewis' 30 year old partner, Mccomb, from Florida, was living with Anne Lewis (presumably his mother), aged 68, who was born in the West Indies.

The Brown & Hand Shipyard occupied all the land west of the Lynch Ferry Landing and southward, being established prior to 1850. Hiram W. Brown and E. D. Hand were partners in several ventures in San Jacinto old town. The shipyard was located on Buffalo Bayou right bank just west of the town of San Jacinto on the Lynchburg Ferry Road. In 1850, the partners had \$1000 invested in the steam driven operation that processed 25 million board feet of lumber into 18 schooners a year, valued at \$8500. Two workers were employed year round at the Shipyard. On 9 November 1850, the 41-year-old E. D Hand from Massachusetts was a single man with a personal wealth of \$2500. Hand had four adult boarders in his household: John Smith 39 from Germany; George Schouter 35 from Germany, James Vernie 32 from England and Rachel Bearne 35 from Kentucky. H. W. Brown, a 36-year-old New Yorker was married to 38-year-old Amanda D. from the District of Columbia. The Brown's had two children, 11 year old

Hiram, born in Alabama and five year old John born in Texas, indicating the family had moved to Texas before 1845.

The Brown & Hand Steam Saw Mill in 1850 had \$3000 worth of personal investments by the partners. The mill processed 600 million feet of logs and 700 million feet of cordwood using six workers. This resulted in 600 million board feet of lumber a year valued at \$9000. The mill continued to operate under various owners through the turn of the century. William Hutchinson purchased the Saw Mill in 1859 and by 1860 was milling over 1.8 million board feet per year from pine, oak, cedar and cypress logs that were rafted down Buffalo Bayou from the Harris & Carpenter and Vince Leagues along the north side of the bayou. The Hutchinson Mill employed five persons to mill 5400 board feet from 18 logs per day. The capital investment was \$3000 in the business and rated as a "14 Horse Power" mill by Hutchinson. The total value of the mill and machinery was appraised at \$28,000.

S. H. Bowman ran a mercantile store in the 1850s in San Jacinto town site. Bowman was a 30-year-old merchant from Ohio with a personal wealth of \$2500 that year. His wife Elizabeth J. was from Kentucky. The Bowman family had two children in 1850, Albert 5 and Emma 3 both born in Texas. Living next door to the family was the John Hutchinson's from Georgia.

Charles H. Graves opened a carpenter's shop in the town of San Jacinto before 1850, constructing the shop building. James was 23 years old and listed as a "lumber man from Illinois." Four slaves were present and living in the town as of 1850 through 1860.

The town of San Jacinto had 14 structures and two boat docks remaining in 1928 and standing through the 1930s. Nine buildings were fronting the ship channel with six of the nine appearing to be associated with the Ferry Landings. Five of the structures back from the waterfront appear to have old plowed fields adjacent to the buildings.

The Chantel Corporation occupied the New Hope Mill site in 1957 on Buffalo Bayou at the southwestern edge of the town of San Jacinto. The old School House continued through 1938 on the Harris County Tax rolls with the building at the northeast corner of the intersection of the De Zavala Ferry and the Houston/Lynchburg Roads.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, a boat-shaped building sat on the edge of the present parking lot where beer was sold and cold drinks, possibly named "The Ark." Lynchburg Crossing Restaurant served seafood from an old house directly across the street from The Ark. In 1979, the owner demolished the Crossing building, constructing a new two-story restaurant on the site across the street from Seguin Park. Hurricane Alicia in 1983 severely damaged The Ark and it was removed from the parking lot site at Seguin Park. The Monument Inn continued in business. The Monument Inn Restaurant now serves seafood across the street from Juan Seguin Park. No buildings exist on Seguin Park site as of November, 2010.

## SECTION 5 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATIONS

On September 4, 2010, JKWCO performed visual surface inspection of the area of potential effects to archeological resources for the project (the entire project area) and excavated six archeological backhoe test units distributed across the area (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Partial profiles of six archeological backhoe tests showing basic stratigraphy of mixed artificial fill over dense clay.**

With the exceptions of a modest-sized parking area along Independence Parkway, a large concrete slab toward the north central portion of the project area, a small boat launch area at the shoreline of the Houston Ship Channel towards the northwest, and two small wooden gazebos on

concrete slabs, the entire project area was overgrown in short grass that was being mowed regularly by Harris County (Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Two photographs of project area taken by the Principal Investigator during fieldwork.**

Ground surface visibility averaged only about 10 to 15 percent, but visual surface inspection of the area was nevertheless done on approximate 10 meter transect intervals, walking zigzag paths. Since the maximum anticipated depth of construction disturbances for the project was about six feet, the backhoe trenches were dug to depths of between six and eight feet below existing grades.

The trenches (Figure 5) were dug in approximate 20-centimeter-thick unit levels (scraps) using a flat-bladed bucket about three feet wide.



**Figure 5. Aerial overlay of project area (within bold white border) with estimated locations of the blocks of historic San Jacinto townsite indicated by orange dashed lines and approximate backhoe trench locations indicated by numbered orange rectangles.**

Each trench was approximately 6 to 8 feet long and one bucket width wide. The trench excavations encountered only multiple layers of modern fill that apparently originated since about 1950, over very dark gray, sticky clay with yellowish mottles (believed to be Beaumont formation). Excavated matrix was dark gray-brown to very dark gray sticky clay with small calcareous gravels or cobbles throughout; mixed with variable-sized chunks of broken concrete; patches and chunks of asphalt; pockets or patches of imported builders sand; rotting lumber, tree roots, trunks, and other vegetation; aluminum foil, pie plates, cans, and ring pull tabs; metal and plastic water pipe segments; cast iron water or sewer pipe fragments; small shreds or fragments of plastic or Styrofoam; a few rusty, plain round wire or barbed wire strands; round wire nail fragments; a few shards of glass bottles (beer, soda, etc.); and isolated clam shell fragments. Screening was not feasible, but samples of excavated matrix from each unit-level of each trench were routinely examined visually, troweled through, and/or subjected to metal detection.

No evidence of pre-1870s artifacts or features of the Historic period, or of prehistoric shell midden or other prehistoric or aboriginal sites was encountered. Nothing was collected.

JKWCO obtained the report of the geotechnical study of the project area. During the study, six bores were drilled on the site with the intent to reach 20 to 40 feet in each. However, all were terminated at depths between two and 15 feet “due to the presence of concrete rubble, bricks, and debris” (HJV Associates 2010). The bore log included with the study report confirmed JKWCO’s observations of subsurface site conditions.

## **SECTION 6 INTERPRETATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results of the archeological investigations performed, JKWCO believed the project area likely contained no cultural evidence or resources worthy of further investigation or eligible for land marking at the local, state, or national levels. JKWCO recommended that the proposed park plaza project should proceed without further cultural resource investigations or archeological monitoring, except in the event of finds during construction of the kinds of cultural evidence originally targeted. The project sponsor was informed that in the event of such finds, work should immediately be stopped in the vicinity until the finds were examined by the Texas Historical Commission or a Commission-qualified archeologist.

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