

INVESTIGATION OF THE ALLEGED SITE OF NUESTRA  
SENORA DE LOS DOLORES DE LOS AIS,  
SAN AUGUSTINE, TEXAS

July 24, 1962

In response to the attached letter from Mr. Steve Kardell, an investigation of a portion of the traditional site of the Ais Mission was carried out by Dee Ann Suhm, L. F. Duffield, and E. B. Jelks on July 24, 1962. The San Augustine County Historical Society was planning to erect a replica of an Ais Indian house at a spot that has been traditionally thought to be the Indian cemetery attached to the mission. Someone thought of the idea that since the hillside at this spot was supposed to be fraught with Indian burials that it would be nice to include one of the burials within the house to be built. With this purpose in mind the University was requested to send an archeologist to help locate and expose one of the burials.

Having arrived in San Augustine on the afternoon of July 23, we contacted Mr. Kardell and plans were made to begin test excavations the following morning to see if a cemetery could be located. The next morning we were met at the site by Mr. Kardell and several other members of the San Augustine Historical Society who had volunteered to assist in the project.

A road maintainer had been arranged for to scrape the topsoil off of the site with the hope that this would expose the grave outlines. About midmorning the maintainer appeared and within a matter of three to four hours the topsoil had been scraped off the whole hillside at the spot that was supposed to have been the Indian cemetery. The results, however, were quite negative--no burials at all were found. Two or three fire pits were observed and dug out, but they contained for the most part, a bunch of early twentieth century trash ~~of~~ which someone had burned in the pits. Four or five possible post molds were noted but they form no consistent pattern. And as to whether these post molds derived from the Spanish occupation of the site, from an Indian occupation, or from the nineteenth or twentieth century occupations was ~~un~~undeterminable.

Late in the afternoon, having become convinced that there were no burials at the site, the inspecting party happily departed into the setting sun.

During the scraping operation several artifacts were picked up from the surface and these were brought back to Austin. Included are a few sherds of majolica that appear to be eighteenth century in make, several hand-forged nails, and a few Indian potsherds.

Edward B. Jelks, August 14, 1962

Texas Archeological Salvage Project

SITE SURVEY FORM

Reservoir Mc Kee Bend Site No. 41 SA 25

State Texas County San Augustin

Location on mission hill in city limits of San Augustin  
historical marker for Mission Nuestra Señora  
de las Dolores de Ais at base of hill  
(Arnold - ET 267) (#-4289-k)

Type of site historic<sup>9</sup>, pottery,

Cultural affiliation 9

Owner and address Mr Bates, (occupant), San Augustine Co. Co.

Informants Mr Bates, (friendly)

Site description Site on hill or fringe of land cut by highway  
1277. Site on both sides of road.

Area of occupation about four acres

Present condition grass grown fields, south of road, house,

Character and depth of fill

Previous investigation or excavation

Previous designations for site

Work done by survey: surface collection , test pits, excavation

Material collected Pot sherds, majolica, faience?  
(See field journal for preliminary observations  
for excavation at Mc Kee Bend, October 1960.

Material observed or reported shells

Recommendations for work

Photographs none Maps of site

Recorded by L. D. Duffield Date October 4, 1960