

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES ON TWO
EXCAVATED HOUSE STRUCTURES
IN WESTERN TEXAS

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In the summer of 1948 an archaeological reconnaissance of the Texas side of the Rio Grande valley between Redford and Fabens, Texas was made by the writer. This reconnaissance was financed by a grant from the Institute of Latin American Studies of The University of Texas and was sponsored by the Department of Anthropology of that institution.¹ In the course of the reconnaissance, 58 archaeological sites were visited and recorded. Of these sites, 49 were not previously known. Surface collections were made from 46 sites and excavations were completed at four sites. Some 5,996 specimens, including 5,689 potsherds, 301 stone artifacts, and six miscellaneous artifacts, were recovered.

A final report on the reconnaissance and on the laboratory studies of the artifacts obtained is now in preparation. Since this report may not be published for some time, it is thought wise to place on record the information obtained from excavation of two house structures in regions where little information as to house type has previously been available. One of the two houses here described (House No. 2, Site 57D2-3) was located near the bank of the Rio Grande at the edge of Redford, Texas. It was excavated in July, 1948. The second house structure described (House No. 1, Site 31C9-5) was located near old Fort Quitman on the Rio Grande below Esperanza. It was excavated in August, 1948. Specimens found in both sites are on file at the Anthropology Museum of The University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

¹ I wish to express my appreciation for this grant to the Institute of Latin American Studies, and in particular to Dr. C. W. Hackett, Director of the Institute. Thanks are also extended to Dr. T. N. Campbell, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Texas, for his generous and painstaking support and encouragement in inaugurating and completing the reconnaissance. I am also indebted to Mr. Herbert C. Taylor and Mr. Myrri McBride for assistance for short periods of time, and to Mrs. Herbert C. Taylor for expediting correspondence from my office in Austin to the field camp in its varied locations. Mrs. Kelley accompanied me throughout the reconnaissance and the work described here is hers as well as mine.

Site 57D2-3

On the eastern bank of the Rio Grande at the site of the old town of Polvo, at the Vado Rojo, about one mile southwest of the schoolhouse at the modern village of Redford, Texas, there is an extensive accumulation of fire-cracked stone and ash. This midden covers several acres of ground between the elbow of an arroyo and the river. It is bounded on the southeast by the road running south from Redford and by a high gravel terrace. At one spot on the site there are several large refuse heaps rising a meter or more above the general level of the midden and containing much artifact material, principally potsherds of the historic period, some quite recent. Among the mesquite thickets of the northern part of the site are depressed areas surrounded by low mounds of fire-cracked stone, apparently the sites of pithouses of the historic or late prehistoric period. In the arroyo to the northeast of the site, lines of charcoal, pit outlines, etc., can be seen in the present cut-bank. Ruins of recent Mexican houses are visible on the site, and there are several houses now occupied.

The site occupies the upper strata of an alluvial terrace, the surface of which lies about 5 meters above normal low water level of the Rio Grande. It lies directly opposite the mouth of the Arroyo Bayo Nuevo which has a considerable drainage area in Chihuahua to the west and has a steady but meagre flow of water. The site lies at the southern edge of an extensive stretch of alluvial farm land on the eastern, or Texas, bank of the Rio Grande. Even more extensive farm lands are formed by the lowlands on the Mexican side of the river and along both sides of the Bayo Nuevo for some distance up that arroyo. Besides Site 57D2-3, other archaeological sites are reported in the farm lands to the north, and several are known in the rough gravel terrace country to the south. There are undoubtedly many sites as yet unreported on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande at this point, and there is a large modern Mexican farm popu-

lation with a concentration in the village of Mulatto, several miles down the river.

Settlement of the modern towns of Redford (formerly Polvo) and Mulatto is said to date back to the building of the local community diversion dams and ditches about 1872 by groups of migrants from Ojinaga, at the mouth of the Rio Conchos, and from Julimes farther up that river. Since there are extensive historic deposits at this site it may have been occupied throughout most of the historic period. In 1746 the Spaniard Joseph de Ydoiaga led a military expedition to La Junta and explored the general region thereabouts, including the Redford valley. Ydoiaga noted that Pulicos Pueblo, which still exists as a modern Mexican hamlet located on the Mexican side of the river about two miles above the mouth of Alamito Creek, was made up of three Indian nations or rancherias; the Puliques, the Cibolas and the Pescados.

Ydoiaga stated that: "These Pescados lived not long ago on the lower river, moving their rancherias, according to their wish and convenience, from place to place along the moist lowlands formed by the river, in order to make their small fields of corn and squash. For fear of the Apache, seeing themselves too few for defense, they came together to live at Puliques and are found now at this pueblo."²

The expedition continued down the Mexican side of the Rio Grande to the entrance to Canon Colorado below Redford. The Redford valley was described and Ydoiaga noted: "In the middle of this valley, on the edge of the river on the northern bank, is seen the ancient pueblo called that of Tapacolmes, the sole vestiges of which are some large adobe walls which remain standing, those of the church or chapel. In its environs lived settled in huts the Pescados (Indians), making their plantations of corn and squash in

² "Quaderno quee comienza con la Carta Orden del Exmo. Senor Virrey, Governador y Capitan General de estos Reynos, de resulta de mi Consulta y Diligencias - - - en la Junta de los Rios del Norte y Conchos, y sus Con tornos" - - - por el Capn Comandante y Comissario dn Joseph de Ydoiaga. Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Mexico, 89-2-3; Dunn Transcripts, 1746-1747, Archives Room, The University of Texas. pp. 44-27.

the moist river lowlands. Because of the Apache, since they are too few to resist them, they went up to the pueblo of the Puliques, where they maintain themselves as a group, as has been said." On the Mexican side of the river, on an arroyo that came down from the Sierra de la Mula, and about one league away from the river they found the *jacales* of an Apache family. This Apache, called Alonzo the Baptized, lived there with his family while hunting deer in the hills, but his actual home was at Pulicos Pueblo where he lived in peace with the other Indians.

Thus, in 1746 the only occupants of the Redford valley were the members of one Apache family. The Pescados Indians had abandoned it some time before, and their main settlement had been that called Tapacolmes on the northern bank of the river, where an adobe church had once existed. The Tapacolmes Pueblo may be identifiable with site 57D2-3, since the general location is correct and this is the only site known to the writer in this vicinity which has extensive historical deposits.

Site 57D2-3 was first reported to the writer by Mr. V. J. Shiner, then of Presidio, Texas, and was later visited by Mr. Victor J. Smith of Alpine, Texas, and by Mr. Donald J. Lehmer, who was at that time supervising the excavations of the First La Junta Expedition of the School of American Research and the Sul Ross College at Shafter 7:1, the Millington Site, near Presidio, Texas. The present site is located on land owned by Mr. Teofilo Carrasco and Mr. Julian Carrasco of Redford, Texas, both of whom have generously granted permission to excavate on their property.

Surface Collections

Surface collections from this made during the 1948 reconnaissance include the following artifacts:

Stone

Chipped Stone: (28 specimens)

Small to medium flake side

Scrapers or knives..... 9 Plate 18, A,B,C.

Small end and side scrapers..... 2 Plate 18, D.

Finger-shaped scraper.....	1	Not shown.
Thumb-nail end and side scraper with graver point.....	1	Not shown.
Small leaf blade, fragmentary.....	1	Not shown.
Utilized flake.....	1	Not shown.
Small to medium cores or rejects.....	6	Plate 18, K.
Dartpoint, Langtry stemmed.....	1	Plate 19, A.
Arrowpoints:		
Perdiz Stemmed.....	2	Plate 19, B, C.
Side notched with concave base.....	1	Plate 19, G.
Side notched with notched base.....	1	Plate 19, F.
Triangular, serrate edges, concave base.....	1	Plate 19, D.
Triangular blade, with very short broad stem.....	1	Plate 19 E.
Pecked and Ground Stone: (10 specimens)		
Manos one-hand, usage both faces, shaped.....	2	Plate 18, I.
End-notched pebbles ("sinkers").....	5	Plate 18, J.
Pebble hammerstone, showing usage at both ends.....	1	Plate 18, H.
Discoidal hammerstone, re- used scraper.....	1	Not shown.
Pebble of volcanic tuff with hole pecked in one surface.....	1	Not shown.

Pottery

Indian Wares: (4 sherds)

El Paso Polychrome.....	3
Polished Red.....	1

Indian-Mexican Wares: (85 sherds)

Conchos Plain.....	78
Conchos Red-on-Brown.....	5
Capote Plain (?).....	2

European and Modern Wares: (25 sherds)

Black and Green on Yellow Crockery (glazed).....	12
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Green Crockery (glazed).....	1
Brown Crockery (glazed).....	3
Red Crockery (glazed).....	1
Cream Crockery (glazed).....	1
White "China".....	2
Blue-On-White "China".....	2
Green-On-White "China".....	1
Red-On-White "China".....	1
Brown Glass.....	1
Total Pottery:	114

Excavations at Site 57D2-3

When Donald J. Lehmer and the writer examined this site in 1938, dipping bands of charcoal, burned roof clay, and other evidences of eroding house structures were noted in the bank of the steep-sided arroyo channel on the northeastern edge of the site. During the present reconnaissance this spot was again inspected, and three or more structures were at once discovered in the bank. The arroyo channel at this point is some 3.5 meters deep, becoming much shallower toward the southeastern edge of the site, where one branch of it originates. The material exposed in cross-section in its bank is almost entirely of alluvial and aeolian origin, consisting largely of sands, silts, and occasional beds or

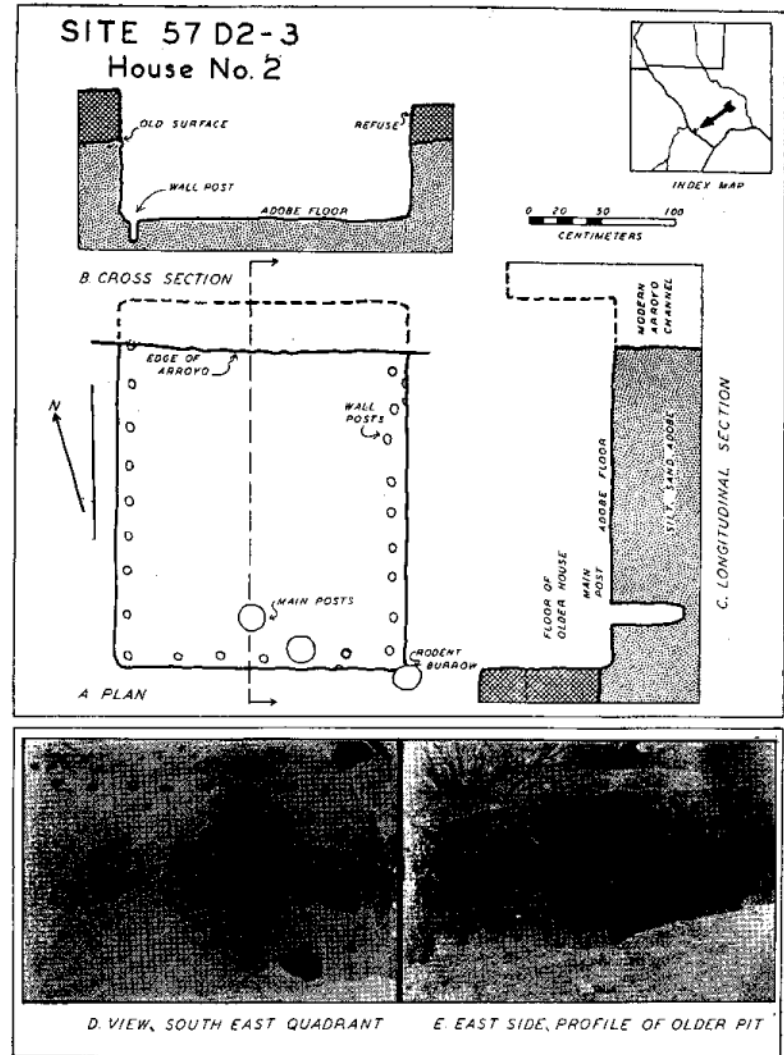


PLATE 16

Site 57D2-3 House No. 2

A. Plan. The northern edge of the house had been destroyed by a modern arroyo channel. Presumably a second pair of large support posts had been set in the northern end of the floor and a ridge pole had rested upon the two sets of support poles.

B. Cross section along edge of arroyo. The house pit had apparently been cut from the old surface shown. The age of the refuse overlying this surface and filling most of the pit was not determined. The floor of the pit had been lined with adobe clay. Burning of the house had hardened and preserved the floor as well as the pit walls up to the level of the old surface.

C. Longitudinal section. The northern end of the pit, destroyed by the modern arroyo channel has been reconstructed in dotted lines. Note relation of floor of old pit to that of present house.

D. View of the south-east quadrant of house pit. The fire-hardened adobe floor, the small wall postholes, and the two large support postholes are shown. The irregular hole at the southeast corner is apparently a rodent burrow. The burned roof and part of the walls lay on the floor, together with segments of burned adobe clay bearing the imprint of the jacal walls at the inside corners.

E. East side of house pit, showing profile of older house pit intersected but not totally destroyed by present pit. The age of the older house was not determined.

(Note: The placement of the directional arrow is only approximately correct).

PLATE 16

lenses of gravel. There is considerable charcoal in the upper 50 centimeters of the fill, which in part at this level must be described as refuse. Toward the southeast, this refuse dips into an old arroyo cross-section and drops to a depth of about 1.5 meters. Thus, there must have been an erosional epicycle during or immediately following the occupation of the site.

The first feature excavated was House No. 1 (not shown). This structure appeared as an irregularly rectangular pit cross section in the bank with a clearly marked burned clay floor about a meter below the surface, and with a dipping band of burned roof or wall debris containing incidentally inclusions of burned clay showing the marks of a *jacal* wall structure. This burned roof debris in places lay directly on the floor and in places on an ashy fill. Only about twenty centimeters of the southern end of the structure remained, most of it having been destroyed by erosion. The parts that did remain compared in size and general features with the southern end of House No. 2, which lay parallel to it some 6 meters to the east with its missing northern wall probably in alignment with the southern wall of House No. 1. The large central post holes of House No. 2 were not present in House 1, however, but were replaced by larger holes at the corner. No specimens were found in House No. 1.

Some 4 meters east of House No. 2, the cross-section of a pit about 1 meter wide and 1 meter deep was exposed in the bank. This did not appear to have been a house but rather a storage pit similar to one found at Shafter 7:3 near Presidio. As in the case of the Shafter 7:3 pit this structure was filled with boulders 10 centimeters or more in diameter. It was not excavated.

House No. 2 (Plate 16)

Apparently only the northern end of House No. 2 had been destroyed by erosion, judging by its size and proportions in relation to similar houses excavated earlier at Shafter 7:1 and Shafter 7:3. This house is a rectangular structure built in a pit and floored with adobe clay. Its present

size is about 2.2 by 2.0 meters; its original size must have been about 2.5 by 2.2 meters. The pit appeared to have been cut down some 55 centimeters from an old surface which lies about 35 centimeters below the present surface. It had been cut into sandy adobe or silt showing no cultural inclusions at this point, but the material overlying the old surface and filling the upper part of the pit contained much charcoal, ash, flint chips, and other indications of human occupation. The pit of House No. 2 had been cut into the northern end of an older pit of greater width, but somewhat shallower. The older pit too had an adobe floor and had been refilled with sandy refuse (Plate 16, C & E) but no data as to its characteristics, age, or cultural associations were obtained.

House No. 2 had been oriented with its long exit extending approximately north-northeast and south-southwest. It had been burned and debris from the burned roof and part of the walls lay on the floor. A line of small postholes, averaging 4 centimeters in diameter and set about 15 centimeters into the floor was uncovered along the edges of the prepared adobe floor a few centimeters in from the pit walls. Along the length of the pit these posts, which were not directly in line, were spaced about 25 centimeters apart. Almost midway along the south wall, and set in some 32 centimeters to the north, was a large posthole about 14 centimeters in diameter, an estimated 45 centimeters in depth, and containing the charred butt of a post. About 35 centimeters east of this hole, and set close to the south wall, was a second posthole similar in dimensions, and likewise containing a charred post butt. Presumably, a second set of two large support posts had been present at the other end of the house but had been destroyed together with the northern pit wall.

Combining the evidence of the postholes, the charred roof and wall debris, and pieces of burned clay from the interior of the roof and walls, the house superstructure may be tentatively reconstructed as follows. The walls were thin and flimsy, supported as they were by small and widely spaced wall poles. They were probably constructed by tying

saplings horizontally across the wall poles and other small vertical poles, *ocotilla* stalks, etc. across these to form flimsy wall panels, which in turn were lightly plastered with adobe clay. The two large posts at each end (?) of the house probably supported a longitudinal ridge pole. From this stringer, beams probably extended to small saplings lying horizontally across the top (in forks?) of the wall posts. Over these, criss-crossed saplings covered with leaves, grass twigs, and possibly river cane or corn stalks formed a fairly thick roof which was then covered with loose silt and sand, rather than adobe clay. The resulting roof was thus nearly flat but with a slight pitch, probably in four directions. A somewhat similar construction is used in making modern *jacal* structures in this vicinity,³ but the modern construction is more substantial, the pits are larger but shallower, if not totally lacking, and often several abutting rooms are constructed. No evidence of an entrance was found, but a roof entry seems most probable. Notably, in neither House No. 2, nor House No. 1, was there any trace of the rectangular plastered blocks of adobe, termed "altars," which occurred midway of the southern end of many of the houses of similar type excavated in the Presidio vicinity.

In the upper fill of House No. 2 one sherd of Chupadero Black-on-White pottery was found, and at a depth of 30 centimeters above the floor a sherd of El Paso Polychrome was recovered. A second sherd of El Paso Polychrome was found on the floor, and in addition the following articles were recovered or noted in place on the floor.

Stone Artifacts: (3 specimens)

Flake side scraper.....	1	(Plate 18, N)
Pestle, with yellow pigment and scratch marks on one flat surface (31.5x10.5x7.5 cm.).....	1	(Plate 18, P)
"Fetish" (concretion with knobby protuberances and high polish; 15.5x11,x9 cm.)	1	(Plate 18, M)

³ See Donald J. Lehmer, "Modern Jacales of Presidio," *El Palacio*. Vol. XLVI, No. 8, pp. 183-186. Santa Fe, 1939.

Other Artifacts: (5 specimens)

- Bone awls (made from half of tibia (?) of small animal, polished; butt ends missing) 2 Not shown
- Antler "tool handle" (portion of butt of antler, smoothed, distal end cut evenly and hollowed; might have served as handle for bone awl) 1 (Plate 18, O)
- Gourd vessel (fragmentary, burned, no data as to shape but lip of opening smoothed) 1 Not shown
- Textile (charred, fragmentary, appeared to be a tassel of fiber cords) 1 Not shown

Total Specimens from House Floor: 9

It should be noted that the bone awls, the antler handle, the fragment of textile, the flake side scraper, and the fragments of gourd came from a small area in the northeastern quadrant of the house, suggesting that the former may originally have been in the gourd container.

PLATE 17

Site 31C9-5 House No. 1

A. Plan. The dimensions and outlines of the house pit and the post supports are shown approximately correct but the irregularity of the eroded floor and the position of the gully is only indicated. The northwestern corner of the pit had been eroded to the level of the floor and the actual walls could not be located. The dashed line indicates the edge of the floor and the approximate location of the wall.

B. Cross section. The original surface level was not determined but a surface level preserved locally in bush clumps probably approximates it, as shown.

C. View. The straight line cutting across the foreground is the edge of the present road cut. The eroding flat, almost denuded of vegetation, surrounding the house was littered with potsherds.

D. Post support. No trace of postholes was found in the house floor or adjoining the pit. Two main support posts had apparently been set upright with their butt ends flush with the floor. Around the bases wet adobe clay had been plastered, producing the feature shown.

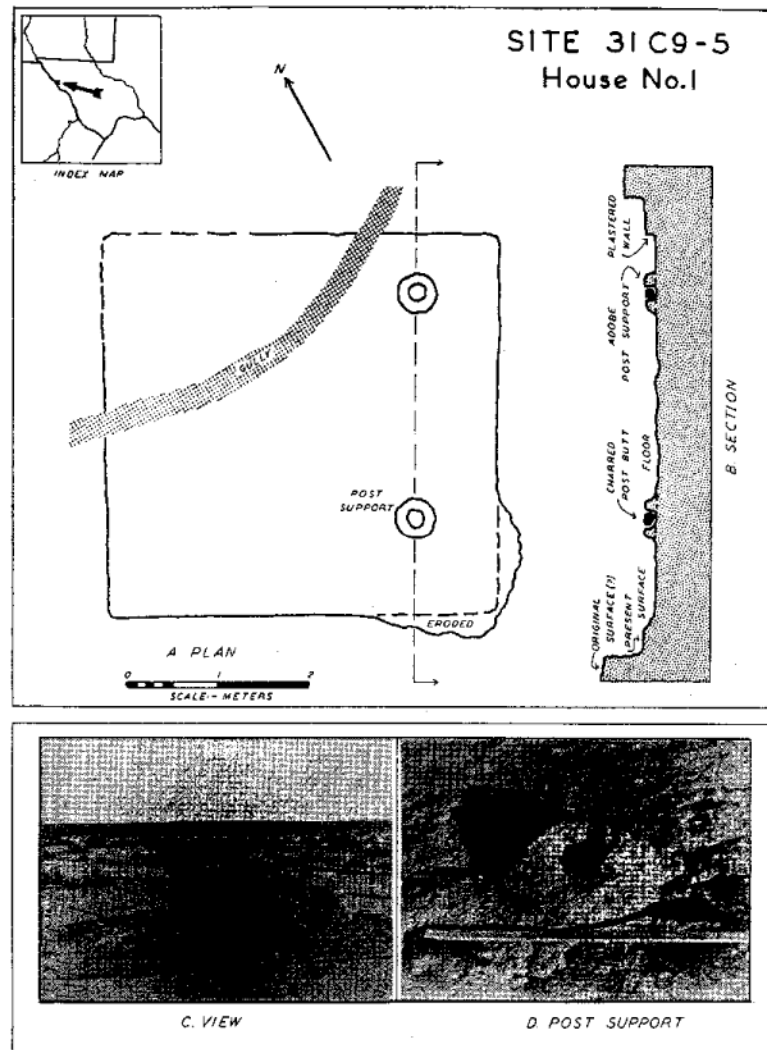


PLATE 17

⁴ Kelley, pp. 31-38, in J. Charles Kelley, T. N. Campbell, and Donald J. Lehmer, "The Association of Archaeological Materials with Geological Deposits in the Big Bend Region of Texas," *West Texas Historical and Scientific Society Publication*, No. 10. (Sul Ross State Teachers College Bulletin, Vol. XXI, No. 3), Alpine, Texas, 1940.

Site 57D2-3: Conclusions

The artifacts from the surface of the site contain such diagnostics of the Bravo Valley Aspect as end-notched pebbles snub-nose, flake side, and thumb-nail scrapers, finger-shaped scrapers, shaped two-faced one-hand manos, Perdiz Stemmed, side-and base-notched, and triangular arrow-points; and the pottery types Conchos Plain, Conchos Red-on-Brown, Capote Plain, Polished Red, and El Paso Polychrome. From fill and floor of House No. 2, the stone pestle, bone awls, and Chupadero Black-on-White are likewise traits occurring in Bravo Valley Aspect components. Houses No. 1 and 2 represent a type commonly found in sites of the aspect. The Langtry Stemmed point belongs with an older cultural horizon and is probably intrusive at this site.

House No. 2 (and probably No. 1 also) belong typologically to the La Junta Focus of the Bravo Valley Aspect, and the pottery types found in the fill and on the floor confirm this identification. The lack of an "altar" is interesting but sufficiently common in such La Junta Focus houses to be without especial significance. The longitudinal ridge pole superstructure, if the interpretation given here is correct, has not been specifically noted in other La Junta houses but may have occurred. The presence of one sherd of Chupadero Black-on-White in the fill, the presence of an older house, presumably of the La Junta Focus likewise since cultures with permanent houses older than this focus are not known from the region, and the lack of an altar together suggest that House No. 2 belongs to the latter part of the La Junta Focus and that it was probably occupied between about 1300 and 1400 A. D., if not slightly later.

The remainder of the surface artifacts, in particular the large number of wares of European wares of late date, together with the lack of early European intrusives such as Spanish or Mexican Maiolica and native wares such as Chinati Plain and Capote Red-on-Brown suggest a very late historic occupation for the site, perhaps very late Conchos Focus (dated tentatively at 1700-1800 A. D.) or even early modern (Alamitos Focus). Since many of the historic wares

are modern, since a ware nearly if not actually identical with Conchos Plain is still used and/or made locally, and since the original site of Polvo is said to have been located here, all of the artifacts not strictly attributable to the La Junta Focus and perhaps also the large refuse heaps near the center of the site may be assigned to the early modern occupation, probably beginning about 1870. There are thus no artifacts attributable to the late prehistoric and early historic Concepcion Focus (dated at circa 1400, to 1700 A. D.) nor any that can certainly be referred to the Conchos Focus (circa 1700-1800 A. D.) However, the large pithouses visible at the surface in the northern part of the site are characteristic Concepcion or Conchos Focus types, and Concepcion Focus components, at least, are notoriously lacking in surface pottery. The point must be settled by future excavation.

Site 31C9-5

This site is located just northeast of the county Rio Grande Valley road about 8 miles down the river from Esperanza in Hudspeth County, Texas. It was discovered in August, 1948 during the Rio Grande reconnaissance. Specimens and field notes are on file at the Anthropology Museum of The University of Texas at Austin.

The site consists of potsherds, occasional fire-cracked stones, and rare traces of dwellings scattered over an eroding alluvial flat. The flat represents the floor of a shallow draw which rises in the Quitman Mountains, five or more miles to the northeast, and disappears in the lowlands of the Rio Grande Valley about 50 meters below the site. At this point the draw is 50 meters or more in width and is bounded by low gravel terrace remnants on either side. It is now traversed by several gullies, one or more meters in depth, and much of the flat has been reduced by wind and water erosion to a bad-lands topography. A few bushes of mesquite and greasewood and occasional cacti scattered over the eroding flat constitute the entire vegetative cover; much of the area is barren of any sort of vegetation. Occasional clumps of mesquite shelter residual alluvial deposits

with an old surface level visible at about 50 to 80 centimeters above the present average level of the flat. Scattered sherds and occasional hearth-stones visible on the eroded surface appear to have been dropped from a higher level and traces of the burned floors of two houses occupied slight elevations in the present flat, although they probably were constructed in pits.

The Rio Grande alluvial valley land below the site is now covered entirely by irrigated farms. No data are available but it is probable that extensive farming in this section and at a distance of about a mile from the river has developed only after installation of the Elephant Butte irrigation system. Prehistoric farming was probably dependent on river flood irrigation, and in the vicinity of Site 31C9-5 *temporal* fields at the mouth of the draw may have been used.

Surface Collections

Surface collections made at Site 31C9-5 during the 1948 reconnaissance include the following specimens:

Stone Artifacts: (5 specimens)

Mano, one-hand, unshaped, one-faced	1	(Plate 18, L)
Hammerstone, discoidal	1	(Plate 18, G)
Cores or rejects	2	(Plate 18, E, F)
Projectile point, fragmentary (type?)	1	Not shown

Potsherds: (367 specimens)

El Paso Polychrome	27
El Paso plain ware (plain sherds of El Paso Brown or Polychrome, undifferentiated)	135
<i>affinis</i> Three Rivers Red-on- Terra Cotta	1
Plain terra cotta ware, as above	70
Brown ware with red painted lip	1
Brown ware, unidentified	16

Banded-incised ware (Mimbres ?)	3	(Plate 19, N)
Banded-corrugated ware (Mimbres ?)	11	(Plate 19, J)
(Playas ?) Corrugated ware	3	
Deep-corrugated ware	67	(Plate 19, L, M)
Smear-ribbed ware	23	(Plate 19, I)
Brushed ware	5	(Plate 19, K)
Unidentified plain sherds	4	
Potsherde disc, smear-ribbed ware	1	

Total specimens from
surface collections 372

House No. 1 (Plate 17)

A local accumulation of charcoal and pieces of burned clay showing the imprint of an *jacal* wall or roof was the only surface indication of the presence of this house. On excavation it appeared that only the floor of the structure and a small section of the lower part of the pit walls on the southeastern and southwestern sides remained, together with the contents of the shallow pit thus preserved.

The house itself was an almost square structure, averaging about 4.3 meters on a side, with diagonals extending almost due north and south. Erosion of the flat had destroyed part of the floor at the northern corner and one shallow gully cut across the house as well as several minor erosional troughs or pits, not shown on the house sketch. The walls of the southern corner of the pit had slumped but the edge of the floor outlined clearly their former location. It was impossible to determine the original depth of the pit but it can not have been great since there is no surviving evidence that the flat ever stood more than 80 centi-

PLATE 18

Artifacts from Site 57D2-3 and Site 31C9-5.

A, B, C.—Flake side scrapers or knives, surface, Site 57 D2-3; D—Small end and side scraper, surface, Site 57 D2-3; E-F—Cores or rejects, Site 31 C9-5, surface; G—Discoidal hammerstone, surface, Site 31 C9-5; H, I, J, K—Surface, Site 57D2-3; H—Pebble hammerstone, I—Two-faced, shaped, mano one-hand, J—End-notched pebble (sinker?), K—Core or reject L—Unshaped mano, one faced, one hand, Site 31 C9-5, surface; M, N, O—Site 31 C9-5, floor of House 2: M—Concretion, indications of handling—fetish?, N—Flake side scraper, O—Antler section, with shaped butt, hollowed end-tool handle?, P—Pestle, with considerable wear in cone shaped area at right end, also peck-marks and yellow pigment on lower forward face as shown.

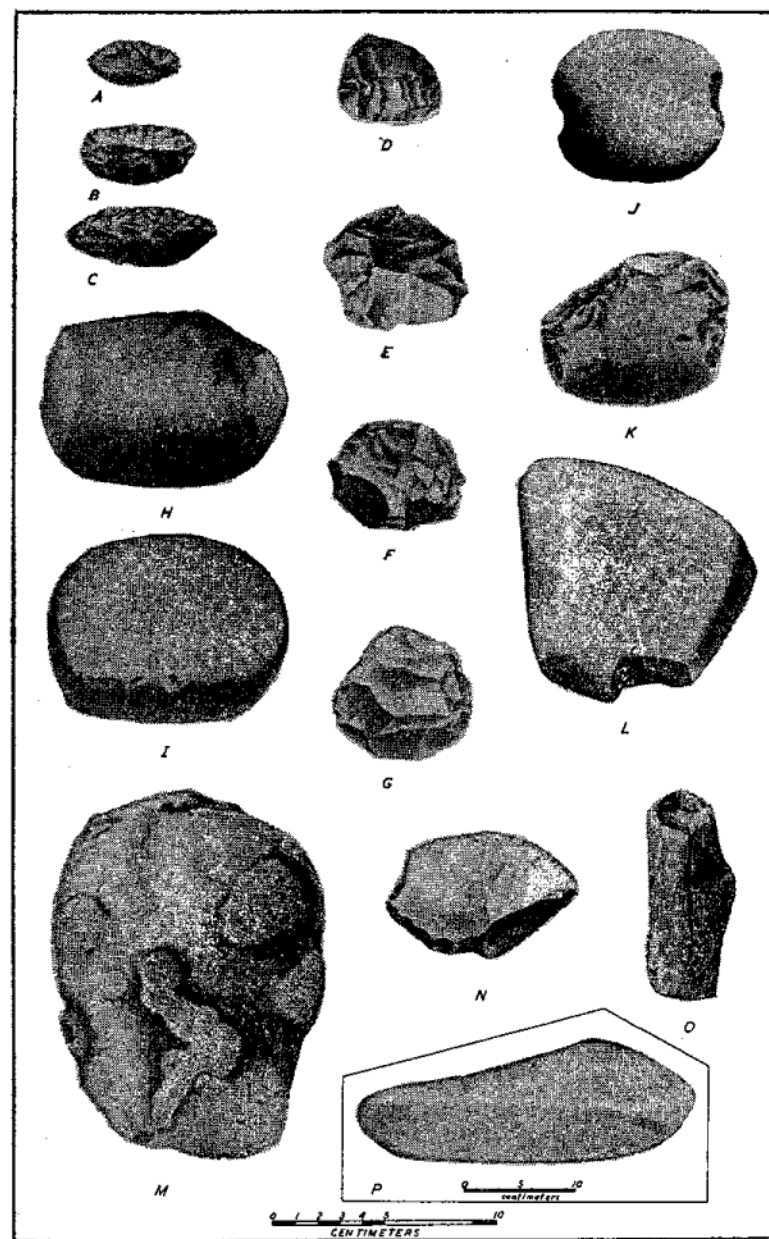


PLATE 18

meters higher than at present, and the pit may have been dug from a considerably lower level. The greatest depth of the pit as now preserved was found to be about 10 centimeters.

The floor and lower walls of the original pit had been covered with a layer of adobe not greatly different in texture or color from that of the surrounding flat. No post-holes were found in the floor, but roughly in line parallel to the southeastern pit wall, the butt ends of two posts, 11 and 12 centimeters in diameter, respectively, had been placed on the floor and held in position by plastering against them masses of wet adobe clay, averaging 36 centimeters in diameter and 10.5 centimeters high (Plate 17, D). Careful troweling of the western half of the house and of the flat just outside the pit revealed no evidence of any other vertical post support or post-hole. The type of super-structure therefore is unknown, although from the burned remains on the floor it is known that the roof was made of criss-crossed small saplings covered with a layer of adobe clay 3 to 7 centimeters in thickness. It is difficult to visualize a super-structure capable of supporting such a relatively firm roof based on only two major supports and placed in such a shallow pit. Perhaps posts were set upright in other parts of the pit without holes or adobe supports. At any rate the structure seems to have been of remarkably flimsy construction and was probably intended for only temporary, perhaps seasonal, usage. Interestingly enough, one of the two other poorly preserved house floors noted at this site also contained an adobe cast of a post butt set squarely on the floor, indicating that the structure type was not sheerly the result of individual eccentricity on the part of one Indian.

On the floor near the northeastern corner of the pit there were many charred beans of the *tornillo* or screwbean tree (*Prosopis pubescens*), and fragments of a charred and crushed coiled basket. Examination of a few relatively intact fragments indicated that the basket was probably an example of two-rod-and-bundle, split-stitch construction, although no further details were ascertainable. A large

quartz crystal (Plate 19, H) also lay on the floor and several potsherds, as listed below, were found either on the floor or in the mass of burned roof debris-lying directly upon it.

Pottery From Floor of House No. 1

El Paso Brown (or a very early phase of El Paso Polychrome, since one direct rim sherd had a black line on rim).....	5
<i>affinis</i> Three Rivers Red-on-Terra Cotta.....	1
Plain Red-Brown, polished.....	1
Plain Brown.....	1
Deep-corrugated.....	1
Total sherds.....	9

Site 31C9-5: Conclusions

The cultural affiliations and chronological position of this site are not clear. The stone artifacts offer no clues either as to age or affiliations. Split-stitch coiled basketry is a trait of the Chisos Focus of the Big Bend Aspect⁵ and of the Hueco Phase.⁶ The specific house type has not, as far as the writer knows, been reported elsewhere. The quantity of pottery and the specific types suggests definite Southwestern affiliations, and specific relationships with the Jornada Branch of the Mogollon culture.⁷

Since the evidence favors a very short period of occupation, the pottery from the house may be lumped with that of the surface collection for further comparison. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that all of the definite El Paso Brown ware sherds came from the house, and that none of the later El Paso Polychrome sherds were found there, though a number of them were found on the surface.

⁵ Kelley, pp. 23-30, in Kelley, Campbell, and Lehmer, *op cit.*, 1940; E. B. Sayles, "An Archaeological Survey of Texas," *Medallion Papers*, No. XVII, Globe, 1935, Chart 8; Victor J. Smith, "The Split-Stitch Basket—A Big Bend Culture Trait," *Bulletin of the Texas Archeological and Paleontological Society*, Vol. 7, pp. 100-104, Abilene, 1935.

⁶ Cosgrove illustrates an example of two-rod-and-bundle split-stitch basketry from Cave 1 in the Hueco Mountains, assigned to the Hueco Basketmaker (Hueco Phase). C. B. Cosgrove, "Caves of the Upper Gila and Hueco Areas in New Mexico and Texas," *Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology*, Harvard University, Vol. XXIV, No. 2, Cambridge, 1947, Fig. 96 a.

⁷ Donald J. Lehmer, "The Jornada Branch of the Mogollon," *University of Arizona Bulletin*, Vol. XIX, No. 2, Tucson, 1948.

It is probable that many of the plain El Paso sherds in the surface collection are actually specimens of El Paso Brown; lacking rim sherds this cannot be definitely determined. At any rate, the following points should be noted:

(1). El Paso wares represent the dominant types and the only definitely identified painted types. El Paso Brown, an early form of El Paso Polychrome, and classic El Paso Polychrome are represented. The El Paso Polychrome apparently is represented in greater quantity than the El Paso Brown.

(2). Wares related to Three Rivers Red-on-Terra Cotta but not definitely assignable to that ware are well represented.

(3). Textured wares, including banded-incised, banded-corrugated, deep-corrugated, smeared-ribbed, and brushed wares are present in quantity. Some of them seem to be identifiable as Mimbres Corrugated wares; others as Playas Corrugated wares of the Chihuahua Culture; others are of unknown affiliations.

(4). Plain or polished brown wares, including one sherd with a red painted lip, of unknown affiliation are represented.

(5). Notably lacking are important ceramic types common in nearby Jornada Branch components, such as Chupadero Black-on-White, Mimbres Black-on-White, true Three Rivers Red-on-Terra Cotta, and the various Chihuahua Polychromes and Playas incised wares.

A general consideration of all these points suggests that the culture represented is a local variant of the Jornada Branch, probably approximating most closely the transition between the Mesilla Phase and Dona Ana Phase. The amount of El Paso Polychrome present, the large quantity of corrugated sherds, and the lack of Mimbres Black-on-White probably means that the site dates later than the Mesilla Phase. The presence of both early and developed El Paso Polychrome, El Paso Brown, Mimbres (?) Corru-

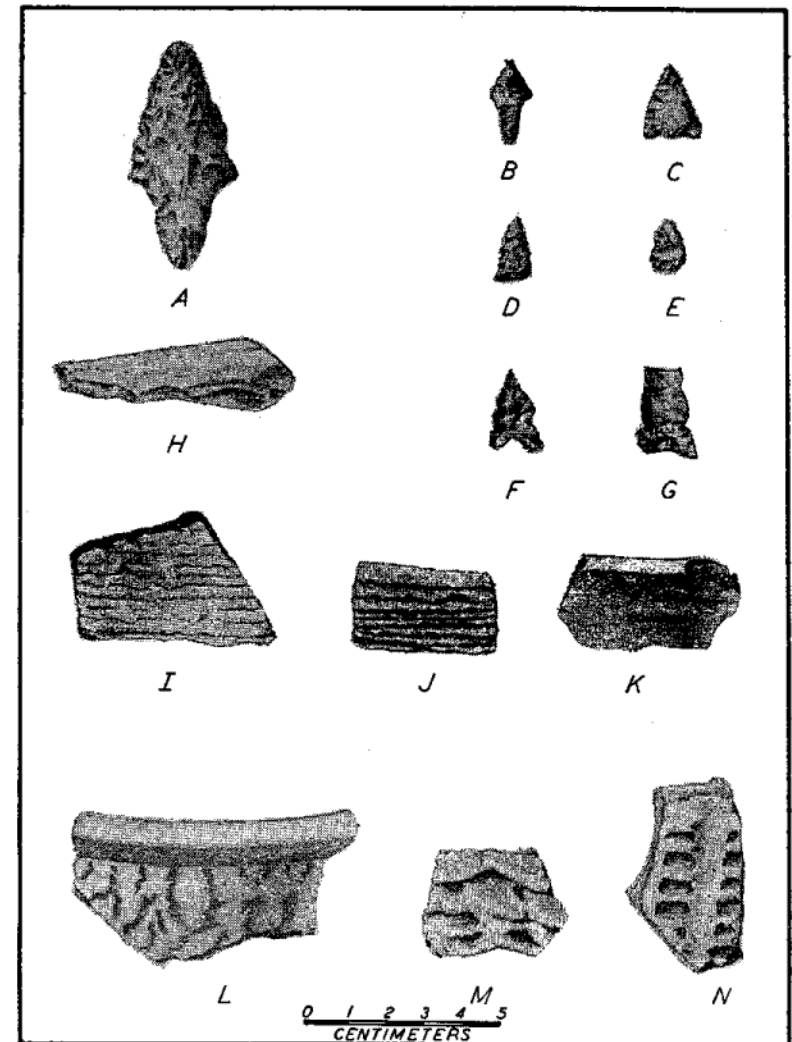


PLATE 19

Artifacts from Site 57D2-3 and Site 31C9-5.

A—Langtry Stemmed dart point, surface, Site 57 D2-3; B-G,—Arrow-points from surface of Site 57 D2-3; B, C (?)—Perdiz Stemmed; D—Concave base, triangular point; E—Small point with broad short straight based stem; F—Side notched and base notched point; G—Side notched point with concave base; H—Quartz crystal from floor of House 1, Site 31 C9-5; I-N—Potsherds from surface of Site 31 C9-5: I—Smeared-ribbed utility ware; J—Banded-corrugated utility ware—Mimbres Corrugated?; K—Brushed ware; L-M,—Deep-corrugated utility ware; N—Banded-incised utility ware—Mimbres?

gated, and a ware related to Three Rivers Red-on-Terra Cotta suggests that the early part of the Dona Ana Phase is represented. The lack of Chupadero Black-on-White and St. Johns Polychrome suggests that the full Dona Ana Phase had not yet developed, and the further lack of any of the Rio Grande glaze wares, Lincoln Black-on-Red, and the Chihuahua polychrome wares indicates that the El Paso Phase is not represented. The latter inferences are supported by the fact that sites containing these wares in quantity, but notably lacking in El Paso Brown, were found only a few miles away in both directions. The age of the site probably falls, therefore, at about circa 1100-1150 A. D., following Lehmer's datings.⁸ The settlement probably represents a temporary seasonal farming camp which utilized run-off of the draw for the irrigation of *temporal* fields, or perhaps this was a camp established for the purpose of collecting *tornillo* beans. At any rate there appears to have been very little occupation of the region before this time, and Site 31C9-5 may well have been a pioneer settlement, which might account for its aberrance in detail from the cultures with which it affiliates.

General Conclusions

Since the full results of the 1948 reconnaissance are not included here, it is impossible to draw general conclusions without bringing data into the discussion which have not been presented in the preceding pages. In order to place the two sites described into a general cultural framework, however, it may be noted that there appears to have been a general expansion of farming communities, derived culturally from the Jornada Branch, down the Rio Grande valley either through diffusion or migration or both, beginning around 1000 A. D., and culminating in areal expansion at about 1300-1400 A. D. Following the period of greatest expansion there was a more or less simultaneous disappearance of all of these farming communities above the Presidio

⁸ *Op. cit.*, pp. 75-89. A full discussion of the various ceramic complexes, their seriation, and their chronology, as followed above, is contained in the pages cited.

Valley, probably around 1400-1450 A. D. Around the mouth of the Rio Conchos in its own valley and the nearby valley of the Rio Grande and downstream in the Redford Valley, agricultural colonies survived the general disappearance and continued in existence in modified form until quite recent times.

In part at least, it seems that the swift spread of a farming economy down the Rio Grande took place, was caused by, and occurred during a period of somewhat improved climatic conditions (from the standpoint of primitive farmers). Similarly, there is some evidence that the sudden and nearly universal extinction of these same farming settlements along the Rio Grande above the Presidio Valley is to be attributed to the passing of these favorable climatic conditions, rather than by the pressure of nomadic tribes such as the Apache in the region. Accordingly, the survival of the farming settlements near and below the mouth of the Rio Conchos is attributable to the much greater and more dependable water supply for available flood irrigation contributed by the Rio Conchos.

The two sites discussed fall into their respective places in this framework. Site 31C9-5 is a relatively early colony established as part of the general movement down the Rio Grande. Site 57D2-3 is a site first established at the height and near the close of this period of colonization, but one which may have survived the period of destruction and continued in occupation into modern times, or else was abandoned and later reoccupied.

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