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A concise chronology of the Rio Grande Delta from the Paleo-Indian period to early Spanish exploration and colonization

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A CONCISE CHRONOLOGY OF THE RIO GRANDE DELTA FROM THE PALEO-INDIAN PERIOD TO EARLY SPANISH EXPLORATION AND COLONIZATION

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

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The Rio Grande Delta's archaeological record is mostly unknown. This paper attempts to assemble scattered resources into a concise and understandable chronology of the Delta's prehistoric cultures. The prehistoric environment is discussed to clear up the misconception that modern day and prehistoric environments were identical. Archaeological contributions are covered to illustrate the difficulties and successes that 20th century archaeologists experienced. Chapter III discusses a few major sites from the region to give an example of what archaeologists have discovered, and what kinds of cultural remnants have been found. A concise chronology covering the Paleo-Indian period through the Late Prehistoric follows. Detailed historical accounts conclude the thesis with early colonists' impressions of local Indians.

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CHAPTER I

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The area of study is known by many names such as the Rio Grande Delta, the Rio Grande Plains, South Texas Plains, Nueces Plains (Hester 1995:427) and the Tamaulipan Biotic Province (TBP) (Presley 2003:1). The TBP, according to W. Frank Blair (1950; 1952) is divided into two districts: the Nuecian district, which is drained by the Nueces River, and the Matamoran District which is better known as the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Despite this north/south division, environmental differences are more distributed east/west due to the Gulf coast (Presley 2003:5). The Matamoran District's main water source is the Rio Grande River but also has water provided by the Rio Salado and the Rio Sabinas in the northeastern Mexican portions of the delta. The Rio Salado is usually dry through most of its course unless there is heavy rainfall. There are numerous arroyos which are dry throughout most of the year but can retain water for long periods of time after heavy rain falls. Natural water reservoirs, such as ponds and lakes, are rare. Abandoned channels of the Rio Grande, known as resacas, form some of the delta's natural narrow lakes (Terneny 2005:5). Many small man-made reservoirs can be found on ranches to support livestock; however, the largest man-made reservoir is mostly for human use, the Falcon Reservoir. The Falcon Reservoir formed in the 1950s, "subsequent to the building of Falcon Dam and the impoundment of the Rio Grande" (Boyd and Perttula 2000:7).

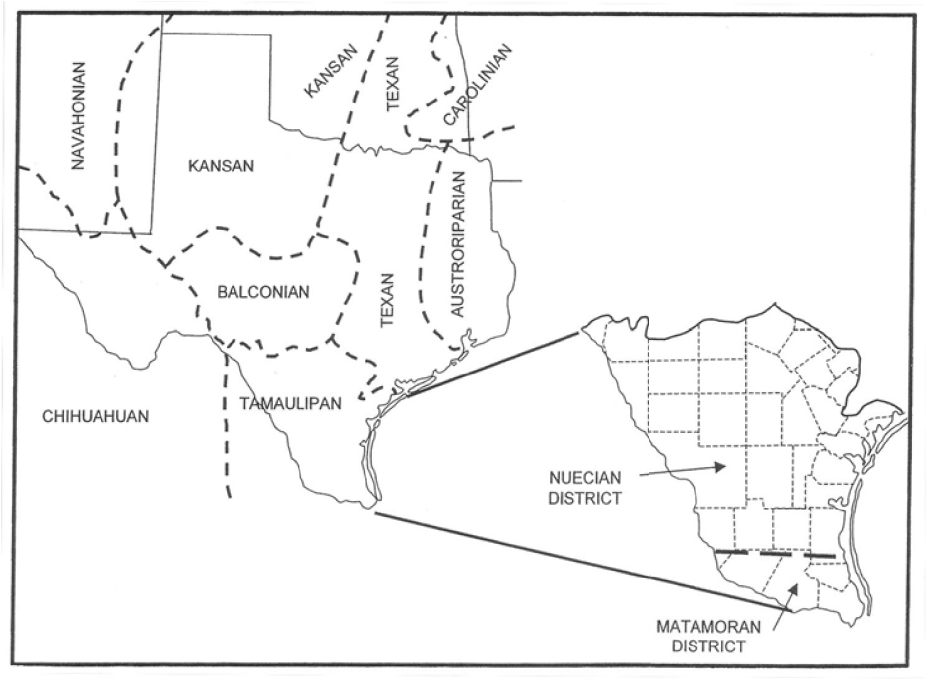

Figure 1.1. *Above*: The Biotic Provinces of Texas featuring the Tamaulipan Biotic Province and its Subdistricts (*Source* Presley 2003:2). Figure 1.2. *Below*: Counties of the Tamaulipan Biotic Province.

The modern day climate of the Rio Grande Delta is semi-arid and subtropical with increasing humidity towards the southeast. Rainfall is erratic but September is, on average, the rainiest month. Precipitation decreases from east to west (Hester 1980a:33; Brush 2005:11). Summers are long and winters tend to be mild. This subtropical region allows a diversity of flora and fauna from a "mixture of species typical of temperate, tropical, desert, and coastal habitats" (Brush 2005:11-13). The soils of the delta also allow for the development of poorly defined riparian forests, marshes, and thorn scrub (Brush 2005:14). These microenvironments range from being very abundant in natural resources to very meager (Hester 1981 cited in Hester 2005:259). Hester (1981 cited in Presley 2003:80) hypothesized that high density resource areas are located near permanent sources of water, such as rivers, whereas low density resource areas are located in regions with less dependable water sources. It is within these high density resource areas that archaeological materials are more likely to occur.

Prehistoric Climate and the Spread of Mesquite

Towards the end of the Ice Age/Late Pleistocene, South Texas's environment could be described as "parkland" containing both grassland and forest features. Now-extinct species such as mammoth and mastodon were present (Hester 1980a:36). Humans have lived in the Tamaulipan Biotic Province since the end of the Pleistocene, about 10,000 or 11,000 YBP (Presley 2003:1). Hester (1975:107-108) wrote:

> "Some ethnohistorians and archeologists have made the mistake of assuming that present-day environmental and vegetational conditions were also present in the prehistoric period. On the contrary, there is substantial historic and archeological data that much of this region was a savannah grassland, with the modern fauna supplemented by such species as bison, antelope, and prairie dog."

According to Boyd and Perttula (2000:15-16), between 7000-5000 YBP the region was drier and warmer than today. After 5000 years ago, Texas appears to have a fluctuating climate with moist and dry cycles, perhaps occurring every 20 or 70 years. Although there would have been moister times, it was never wet enough to drastically change the overall climate of the area. However, since most occupation sites are found on arroyos that are now dry, as well as many miles from the rivers and other present-day water sources, there is an indication that the climate was wetter than it is at present. This is due to the assumption that humans would have chosen to occupy sites where water and other natural resources were available.

Although archaeologists have sought to reconstruct the paleoenvironment of the TBP, it has proved difficult due to poor preservation of pollen. South Texas is not suitable for pollen preservation since it lacks dry caves, generally has high soil pH, and has low soil organic content. Instead, researchers have had to use data from Central Texas (Presley 2003:25-26). Research of central Texas climates indicates that the late Pleistocene/early Holocene was cooler and wetter. Afterwards, there is evidence of warming and drying of the region. This warming and drying trend was also experienced farther north so it is assumed that the trend also occurred in South Texas (Presley 2003:68).

Information about prehistoric climate can also come from faunal remains. Faunal remains are not only an indicator of the climate, but they can also provide information on prehistoric diet. Hester and Hill (1975:16-17, 25-29) studied a probable trash pit at the late prehistoric site 41ZV155, known as the Tortuga Flat Site, in Zavala County. The trash pit contained twenty-two different species of mammals and reptiles making it

apparent that many kinds of animals were eaten. Javelina and armadillo, found in South Texas today, were not part of the faunal assemblage; javelina have been found in small numbers in other sites dating as early as AD 1300, but did not increase until the 1800s (Hester 1980a:37). Quail is also absent even though it is today a popular, easy to trap, game bird. Since quail favor a brush habitat, their absence in the prehistoric faunal lists may also hint at savannah conditions (Hester 1980a:159). Likewise, several species such as bison, antelope, and prairie dog are no longer found in the faunal assemblage. Antelope and prairie dog are species at home in short-grass prairies. "Their presence in the late prehistoric contexts offers support for the hypothesis…that the mesquite brushland environment of south Texas has come about only during the past 200-300 years" (Price and Gunter 1943; Inglis 1964 cited in Hester and Hill 1975:17).

This evidence does not mean that South Texas was a large open short-grass prairie. Hearth charcoal analyses done by Holloway (1986 cited in Hester 1995:428) show that mesquite was present in riverine zones as early as 6000 BP. It is more likely that thick vegetation occurred along streams but there were more open grassy uplands than found today (Hester 1975:18). Early historic accounts give contradictory information about the extent of mesquite in the Rio Grande Delta. Some accounts "report vast grasslands, while others note that mesquite was rather widely distributed" (Hester 1995:428). In the late 1980s Archer et al. (1988 cited in Presley 2003:23) concluded that the region was transitioning away from being grassland mixed with clusters of mesquite to becoming mesquite woodland.

Mesquite was limited to the riparian zones prior to the introduction of livestock. The increase in mesquite could be due to human actions such as the overgrazing of

livestock and brush fire control. It may also be due to a gradual environmental change or a combination of the two. Animals would have dispersed mesquite seeds but these seeds had a possibility of being destroyed by local wild fires. After the introduction of livestock, wild fires would have been controlled by humans (Archer et al. 1988 cited in Presley 2003:23). Shimidly (2002:382) also claims that the suppression of fire led to a loss in landscape complexity. Campbell and Campbell (1981:17 cited in Black 1986:29) note an account by Cabeza de Vaca that a particular native group, called the Mariame, would sometimes control the movement of deer with fire. By burning large areas of open prairie, the deer would congregate in small unburned areas. Experimental burning at Welder Wildlife Refuge has demonstrated that fire helps maintain grasslands and reduces brush species density, although it does not greatly affect already dense brush areas. Prehistoric fires, whether started by man or nature, may have helped control brush spread (Black 1986:29-30).

There are two hypotheses in the literature about this environmental change. The first hypothesis is that the current environmental conditions are a recent event that is the result of post-contact human interaction with the environment (Presley 2003:52). It is during this post-contact period that the spread of mesquite, decrease of surface water, loss of large predators and antelope, and "intrusion" of the armadillo take place (Hester 1980a:36-37). The second hypothesis, proposed by faunal analysts, is that the TBP has always been characterized by the presence of mixed faunal communities regardless of time period. This hypothesis is based on the presence of Mexican or Neotropical taxa being present in the region during the prehistoric period. There is an agreement between

the two hypotheses that some species were lost due to human manipulation of the environment (Presley 2003:53).

It does seem that there was more tree growth in South Texas than today. Early historical accounts, such as those left by Don Domingo de Teran (cited in Presley 2003:28), mention thick forests. Don Domingo, in 1691 lost some cattle in forests of Maverick and Zavala Counties and had difficulty moving his troops through them (Presley 2003:28). Even in the early 1900's the region had more lush vegetation in comparison with today. During a Biological Survey of Texas in 1905, field agents reported forests of palmetto, cedar elm, and Texas ebony, all of which are present today but are considered threatened species (Presley 2003:30).

These changes also affected animals in the area. As much as 35% of the mammalian species have either been reduced in population or are now extinct. Significantly reduced species include: pronghorn, gray wolf, beaver, jaguarundi, ocelot, and jaguar. Grey wolves were purposefully exterminated because they were a threat to livestock but they may have also begun to decline with the loss of their preferred prey, bison (Presley 2003:50-51).

Hester (1980a:36) describes the general condition of the prehistoric past having temperatures similar to those of today but with more abundant water and with more open grassland savannas in the uplands. Groves of mesquite and other trees grew along the streams. He also states that, "It seems likely that all the plants in the region today were there in the prehistoric past, but differing in numbers and varying distributions" (Hester 1980a:36). This, of course, excludes plants that were introduced after colonization.

The Role of Plants in Subsistence

As stated previously, pollen is not well preserved in South Texas; however, analyses of human skeletal remains from burial sites do offer some information on prehistoric diets. According to Perttula (2001:64) stable isotopes in small samples of bone collagen from human remains are helpful in determining prehistoric diets, "particularly the mix of C3 (most plants, herbs, and shrubs), CAM (mainly desert succulents), and C4 plants (tropical and warm-season grasses, and certain shrubs)" (Perttula 2001:64).

"The only direct evidence of plant foods is in the form of hackberry seeds and charred fragments of acorns" (Hester 1980a:159). The best evidence of what sorts of plants were part of the native inhabitants' diets is actually from early historic accounts of Spanish explorers, especially Cabeza de Vaca who lived for eight years (1528-1536) as a captive and medicine man amongst the South Texas Indians (Newcomb 1972:33). Explorers frequently referred to wild plant foods gathered by the natives; unfortunately, they often gave general terms such as fruits or herbs. The sources do make it clear that prickly pear, mesquite, and maguey root crowns were the three most used plants. Prickly pear was the most mentioned plant food. In 1535, Cabeza de Vaca observed the prickly pear fruits and pads being used, usually roasted, by various Indian groups on both sides of the Rio Grande (Cabeza de Vaca 1542, 42a-42b; Oviedo y Valdes 1959, 4:305-306 cited in Salinas 1990:117-118). Cabeza de Vaca also states in his accounts that the juices of the prickly pear fruit were stored in earth pits and drank. Like many foods consumed by the natives, the prickly pear skin was dried and ground into a flour and consumed or stored (Newcomb 1972:41-42).

Cabeza de Vaca was given twenty loaves of bread, made of mesquite-bean flour, indicating that mesquite beans were ground (Salinas 1990:118). Although mesquite is considered a nuisance today, it was a highly valued food source to the natives. The beans of the mesquite are very nutritious and have a sweet taste. When the beans were in excess, they were dried and ground into flour and mixed with other seeds and berries and sometimes ground bones of warriors who died from natural causes (Newcomb 1972:42; Rogers 2000). The mixture was called mesquitamal by the Spaniards (Newcomb 1972:42). Cabeza de Vaca (Smith 1871:140-141 cited in Rogers:2000) also describes another method of preparation of mesquite beans. The beans were put into a hole in the ground and pounded with a club, "a fathom and a half in length." This action mixed earth with the mashed beans making them sweet. Other "special earth" was added and the mixture was pounded again then placed in a container and covered with water. The broth was tasted and, if not sweet enough, then more earth was added. Cabeza de Vaca described the Indians as having greatly distended bellies from consuming the earth and water (Newcomb 1972:43; Rogers 2000).

Other plants used for food mentioned by early explorers include: garlic, onions (these two were probably not consumed prior to European contact as they are not native to the region), yucca flower buds, palmetto and unspecified roots, fruits and herbs (Chandler and Kumpe 1996:34; Salinas 1990:119). Some accounts mention that interior groups would gather in the fall for pecan nut harvests while prickly pear and mesquite beans were harvested in the spring and summer (Hester 1976:7). Plants could also be used to capture meat sources. The South Texas natives were described by Cabeza de Vaca to be superb archers and their bows were made from mesquite root and the

bowstrings from lechuguilla fibers (or deer sinew) and arrow shafts were made of reed (Newcomb 1972:44; Salinas 1990:126).

It is not known if plants were used for medicinal purposes in prehistoric times but such uses are documented in early 1800s accounts by a botanist named Berlandier (cited in Martin 1990:134). Berlandier briefly mentioned the use of herbal medicine among a group of surviving natives known as Carrizos. Amongst the plants he mentioned were the seeds of *maucate* (*Pithecellobium ebano,* Texas Ebony) used as a laxative, leaves of *cenzilla* (*Leucophyllum frutescens,* Texas Sage or Texas Ranger) made into a tea and drank as an antipyretic. The tea was sometimes mixed with the sap of maguey (*Agave Americana).* Berlandier also mentions various herbs being used to treat syphilis but he did not specify the herbs. Some authors mention a drink similar to mezcal being drunk in the winter; this drink was mixed with ground red beans from the Texas Mountain Laural (*Sophora secundiflora*) (Newcomb 1972:41). The seeds of the Texas Mountain Laural are poisonous and can cause hallucinations and have narcotic properties. There are also some accounts of peyote (*Lophophora williamsii)* being used in ceremonial dancing. These dances went on all night until daybreak (Newcomb 1972:55). Peyote was also dried and ground into a powder and drunk like tea (Newcomb 1972:41). Many of the groups in early historic accounts were tattooed. Although the tattooing process itself did not involve plants, tattooing was preceded by "rubbing herbs that gave a cooling sensation to the newly tattooed areas" (Newcomb 1972:50).

There have also been a number of stone pipes found in the South Texas area. This would indicate that some plant matter was being smoked, but unfortunately, the contents of the stone pipes have yet to be identified. Ashy fill from eight pipes were sent

to be tested at Texas A&M University but the contents were too charred for pollen analyses. When it was realized that the ashy fill could have been used for chemical analysis there was not enough left. It is also the habit of collectors and looters to clean the pipes out. It is unknown if the pipes were used for everyday smoking or if they were used by shamans for curing disease and other rituals (Taylor and Highley 1995:503)

The Role of Animals in Subsistence

Animal bones have been found at several sites so prehistoric meat sources are somewhat easier to determine. Late sites in the delta also contain large numbers of snail shells, which, Hester and Hill (1975:16) believe were intentionally gathered as food. This same pattern has also been found in Central Texas. Mussel shell middens have also been found in late prehistoric sites so mussels may have been utilized as food and/or their shells were used as raw materials.

In the aforementioned site, 41ZV155, the Tortuga Flat Site, the large game in the faunal assemblage consisted mainly of antelope and deer. Bison, although rare, were also present. Most of the meat sources found came from smaller animals such as rabbits, rodents, turtles, snakes, frogs and fish. Birds appear to only be a minor part of the diet with the wild turkey being the most common. Other animals found in the trash pit include coyote, gray fox, and raccoon, which may have been killed for their skins and pelts (Hester and Hill 1975:16-17, 25-29). Early historic accounts describe particular Indian bands in Nuevo Leon using rabbit skins, cut and twisted together, to make blankets and robes. Although there is little mention of clothing there is mention of loincloths (possibly made from animal skins) decorated with animal teeth (Newcomb 1972:39).

W.W. Newcomb (1972:30) mentions that the natives had no domesticated animals, except for a barkless dog (maybe used as food), and that no single animal species was abundant enough to be a major food staple for the natives. Instead, many small edible animals supplemented a diet consisting mainly of plant foods. Cabeza de Vaca (cited in Newcomb 1972:40-41) mentioned the natives eating spiders, ant eggs, worms, lizards and snakes and even deer feces. It is possible that the natives were removing seeds from the deer feces and eating them as some native groups in California did with human feces (Newcomb 1972:41).

Hester (1976:5-8) divides South Texas into two major ecological adaptations. One is the "savanna adaptation," which is concentrated in the interior of the delta. The other is the "maritime adaptation," found along the lower coast. There would have been other minor ecological adaptations as well, such as "desert adaptation" and "lake-side adaptation." Faunal remains from the savanna areas (Hester based this on intense studies in northwestern Zavala County) consist mostly of whitetail deer bones. Jackrabbit, cottontail rabbit and land turtle are also common. Freshwater mussels and land snails occur in abundance at some sites. Fish and bison are rare. Maritime adaption peoples were similar to the savanna adaptation peoples but they were orientated toward marine resources. Land faunal remains of the maritime areas include: whitetail deer, land turtle and possibly opossum. Fish, especially Black Drum, shellfish, and crustaceans were the most abundant. Oyster was a favored food but it is no longer present in the area perhaps due to environmental change. There are no remains of waterfowl but early historic ethnographic accounts do indicate that they were hunted. Alligators were also hunted for

food and the maritime peoples were reported to have applied the alligator fat to their bodies to repel mosquitoes (Hester 1980a:50).

Animal remains also show up as grave goods in human interments. Perforated canine teeth, mainly coyote (*Canis latrans*), are found in many burial sites in the Rio Grande Plains and Tamaulipas, Mexico (Perttula and Boyd 1998:11; Perttula 2001:17). There are a few artifacts known as "rasps" in the region. They are usually made of deer metatarsal but were sometimes made of wood. These "rasps" are believed to have been used as musical instruments or noise makers (Taylor and Highley 1995:528).

Antler racks and deer skulls, or deer skull fragments, can be found in association with burials in south Texas. They are found in several sites including Loma Sandia, and sites in Victoria County. These antlers and skulls are not modified for tool use so their placement in burials may signify a religious-ceremonial use. Antler racks can be found in burials from the Archaic to the Late Prehistoric periods. Antler racks have not found in all burials. Sometimes several have been found in a single burial, indicating that there may have been a high social status associated with the antlers. Rock art in the Trans-Pecos region of Texas depicts shamans with antler headdresses so it is a possibility that the antler racks and deer skulls served a similar purpose in South Texas (Taylor and Highley 1995:530-531). At Loma Sandia antler racks were only found in male burials, but shark teeth were only found in female burials (Perttula 2001:17).

Figure 1.3. Painting by TBH artist Frank Weir, interpretation of evidence from Loma Sandia burial site. Note deer antler racks associated with burial and shaman.
(*Source* www.texasbeyondhistory.net)

Figure 1.4. Deer antler cluster from a Loma Sandia burial. (*Source* www.texasbeyondhistory.net)

Beads are another common grave good in the region. Both bone beads (sometimes made of human bone) and shell beads are found associated with burials. Bone beads tended to be tubular and some bone tubes may have been pipe stems from stone pipes as some of these tubes were found in association with pipes (Taylor and Highley 1995:526). Marine shell beads were usually made from whelks (*Busycon)*, *Marginella apicina* shell or olive shell (*Oliva sayana*) (Perttula 2001:17). Olive shell tinklers were also found in burials, typically in association with the perforated coyote teeth, which were sometimes suspended inside as a clapper (Hester 1980a:122).

The most extensive use of shell ornaments in South Texas comes from the Late Prehistoric Brownsville Complex. There is evidence of massive shell ornament production where beads, tinklers, and pendants were made. Conch shell, were heavily used and occasionally olive shells and the *Dosinia discus* clams. The Brownsville Complex people produced more shell ornaments than they could have used so it has been "speculated that they engaged in widespread trade with the Mesoamerican cultures of the Huasteca along the Gulf of Mexico" (Hester 1980a:122).

Maritime adaptation peoples would have used shells for utilitarian purposes as well. Shell tools found in Archaic sites just north of Corpus Christi include shell points, shell, adzes, scrapers and hammers. These tools were usually made of conch, clam, or cockle shells (Hester 1980a:122). There are not many bone tools found in South Texas occupation sites. The few bone tools found are usually bone awls, bone pressure-flaking tools and tiny bone needles (Hester 1980a:120).

Summary

The environmental setting of the South Texas region, also called the Tamaulipan Biotic Province, has not had dramatic changes throughout most of its studied time periods. The Ice Age in South Texas consisted of grassland, forest environments, and large Ice Age mammals such as mammoth and mastodon (Hester 1980b:36). The end of the Ice Age led to the extinction of megafauna and ancient peoples would have had to start hunting smaller game for subsistence. Evidence from Central Texas indicates that, after the Pleistocene, Texas experienced fluctuating periods of cool and wet periods followed by warm and dry periods (Presley 2003:68). Streams and river channels were more abundant and riparian zones would have been present along these water sources. The mesquite that is vastly present today would have been restricted to these riparian zones before the introduction of livestock but its spread may have also been due to gradual environmental change (Presley 2003:23). As streams and rivers flowed they would have eventually changed courses or dried out. These natural actions would have affected where people choose to camp or dwell, and therefore, South Texas archaeological sites do not often overlap from one time period to another. The South Texas environment did not lend towards good preservation of most organic materials and would provide a challenge to the thinking of South Texas archaeologists.

CHAPTER II:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF SOUTH TEXAS

Interest in South Texas archaeology has not been too pronounced compared to other grand cultures of the Americas such as the Aztecs or the Puebloans of the Southwestern US. The growth of interest in the area has been slow and technically did not begin until the 1930s. Perhaps this is because a few of the South Texas and Northeastern Mexican Indians were still visible in the late 1800s, and interest increased only after the cultures were nearly or completely extinct. It is not to say that interest in South Texas and Northeastern Mexico was non-existent, but without publications on the matter, it is difficult to ascertain the extent of knowledge. Below is a summary of a few of the archaeological contributions from the 1930s to the late 1970s, after which time the resources become abundant.

1930s

An early contribution for the South Texas area was from A.E. Anderson, a Brownsville resident, who had collected over 2,000 artifacts from 196 sites in Cameron and Willacy Counties between 1908 and 1940. Anderson mapped all the sites and described the artifacts he retrieved (Terneny 2005:13). Most of the sites Anderson located were in old dried up resacas or clay dunes along the coast (Terneny 2005:13-14). Most of Anderson's artifacts are currently being housed at the Texas Archaeological

Research Laboratory (TARL) in Austin, Texas. These artifacts include projectile points[1], Huastec ceramics, knives, scrapers, bone tools, bone beads, hammerstones, pumic-stone pipes, and drills. Anderson's collection is still used by today's archaeologists attempting to reconstruct South Texas prehistory (Terneny 2005:14).

Archaeological publications for the South Texas area, in the 1930s, typically consisted of artifact distribution studies. In 1935, E.B. Sayles conducted a survey of Texas archaeology. Here he defined the "Coahuiltecan Branch," a gulf region group characterized by numerous campsites and hearths along streams as well as numerous lithics (Hall et al. 1982:7). Sayles also created the concept of the "Brownsville Phase." The two groups were thought to be from two different time periods and were based on artifacts and assumed linguistic divisions. The "Brownsville Phase" was characterized by a shell industry, Huastec-like or Rockport ceramics, marine resource subsistence, and was in the Late Prehistoric period. The "Coahuiltecan Branch" was believed to be an Archaic period occurrence (Sayles 1935:117 cited in Terneny 2005:17). It was represented by hunting subsistence artifacts such as lithic artifacts. Another contributor to South Texas archaeology in the 1930s was Patterson. Patterson (1936:19-20, 27 cited in Hall et al. 1982:7) studied corner-tang knife distribution in Texas. He believed that the corner-tang knives originated in central Texas and spread southward. He noted some in McMullen, LaSalle, Maverick, Frio, Dimmit and Atacosa Counties (Terneny 2005:15).

1940s

The 1940s marked some of the first published archeological site investigations. E.H. Sellards worked at Buckner Ranch, sometimes called the Berclair Terrace site, in Bee County. The report was a paleontological study about Paleoindian and stemmed

[1] For a description of all projectile points mentioned in this text, please refer to Appendix.

projectile points in association with Pleistocene fauna. Although the site is considered important now, it was ignored for a long time after Sellards's work by later researchers (Taylor and Highley 1995:32).

Also in 1940 was A.T. Jackson's comparison of stone tubes from A.E. Anderson's collection and other stone tubes recovered from sites throughout Texas and portions of northeastern Mexico. All but four of the stone tubes were found on the American side of the Rio Grande Delta. Stone tubes from the Rio Grande Delta and the Texas coastal bend had the greatest similarities (Jackson 1940:116). These two factors started the discussion of whether or not the contemporaneous cultures were separated by the Rio Grande River (Terneny 2005:17).

From November 1945 through June 1946 Richard S. MacNeish conducted an archaeological study in portions of Sierra de Tamaulipas, coastal Tamaulipas, and the nearby portion of Texas. His study was not out of interest in South Texas archaeology, but, instead, was part of an attempt to find cultural relations between the Mississippian mound builders and "the more complex cultures of Mexico" (MacNeish 1947:1). However, during this survey MacNeish found, described, and classified several types of artifacts and assigned them to the Brownsville Complex (Terneny 2005:19). MacNeish believed that the Brownsville Complex was one of two culture complexes that had a "direct bearing on Mexico-Southeast relationships" (MacNeish 1947:5). MacNeish (1947:5-6) based his conclusions on 82 sites, 10 of which were self-discovered, 14 located and resurveyed using A.E. Anderson's data, and 58 also known from Anderson's collection and field notes (not resurveyed). The sites were located on small rises near now-extinct water sources and were characterized by broken shell artifacts, hearths, shell

beads, and a few bone artifacts. Burials were found away from campsites with a few located within the campsites. The burials were typically flexed and fewer than half had burial goods. Burial goods found were usually beads, pendants, or pottery (MacNeish 1947:6-7). Huastec artifacts were found in Brownsville Complex sites and vice-versa indicating trade contacts between the two (MacNeish 1947:8). Through his surface finds, MacNeish determined that the Brownsville Complex may have lasted until historic times, based on a projectile point made from green bottle glass, and did not go back further than 1000 AD (MacNeish 1947:8). The Huastec artifacts were rare in the Brownsville Complex area and could not be found along the coast or in Central Texas, leaving no plausible route between Mexico and the Southeastern U.S.

In 1948 a significant site was discovered by a land owner during construction on his own property. The site, known as the Ayala site (to be discussed in more detail below) would become one of the most significant cemetery sites in South Texas. The site contained a collection of artifacts ranging from the Archaic period to the Late Prehistoric (Terneny 2005:22).

1950s

During the 1950s the interest in South Texas archaeology grew. One of the first professional archaeological programs in South Texas began in 1950 with the preparation for the construction of the Falcon Dam and Reservoir. The survey and testing program was conducted by the University of Texas at Austin (Taylor and Highley 1995:32; Hall et al. 1982:8). These initial investigations resulted in the recording of 51 sites and the excavation of 3 sites (Taylor and Highley 1995:32). By 1953 about 109 sites were recorded, 88 of which had prehistoric components (Terneny 2005:22).

In 1954, Suhm, Krieger, and Jelks published a summary of Texas archaeology where they divided their chronological framework into four stages: Paleo-American (9000-4000 BC), defined by the early nomadic Pleistocene fauna hunters; Archaic (4000/3000 BC to AD 1000), defined by hunters and gathers who hunted smaller game than the Paleo-American peoples; Neo-American (AD 0/1000 to historic contact), defined by pottery processing and arrow points, and in some cases agriculture and permanent settlements; and the Historic (Suhm et al. 1954:15-21). In this summary there were no Neo-American sites recorded in South Texas because this stage was defined by pottery processing, and pottery was believed to have been absent until the arrival of Spanish colonists (Suhm et al. 1954:142).

In regards to South Texas, Suhm et al's 1954 chronological framework finds no sites for the Paleo-American stage, but does contain isolated finds (Suhm et al. 1954:136). The Archaic stage contains two foci, Falcon and Mier, defined by Suhm et al. The Falcon focus was identified by sites from Falcon Reservoir and by artifacts in private collections. Evidence included open campsites, Tortugas, Abasolo, and Refugio dart points. Subsistence depended largely on game, reptiles, insects and prickly pear. The Falcon Focus was estimated at 5000 BC to AD 500 or 1000 (Suhm et al. 1954:138-141). The Meir Focus was similar but had smaller Matamoros and Catán dart points, and Fresno, Perdiz, and Starr arrow points; stone pestles were also present. The Meir Focus was considered the bridge between the Falcon Focus and the Historic time. As stated previously, the Neo-American stage was not recognized in South Texas. The Historic stage consisted of the time after Spanish contact when many South Texas Indians began to decline (Suhm et al. 1954:141-142).

In 1956 William W. Newcomb Jr. published an article titled "A Reappraisal of the 'Cultural Sink' of Texas. The term "cultural sink" was used in the 1920s by J.R. Swanton to refer to the area between the Pánuco River of Mexico (Huastec regions) and the Caddoan tribes of northeast Texas. This put the Indians of Northeastern Mexico, South Texas and the Texas Gulf in the "sink" (Newcomb 1956:146). Compared to the cultures of Central Mexico, "the tribes of the 'sink' area had lower, poorer, and inferior cultures" (Newcomb 1956:149). While the sink cultures were defined by cannibalism, Newcomb (1956:149) stated that this trait was not enough to distinguish these peoples because ritual cannibalism was widespread in North and Central America. The South Texas peoples were called the Coahuiltecan, but there was no ethnohistorically documented Coahuiltecan tribe. Newcomb (1956:151) stated that the Coahuiltecan consisted of many small autonomous tribes that were relatively, but not completely, homogenous in their cultural entity. Rather than cannibalism being a characteristic trait of the Coahuiltecan, peyote dances and rituals were more distinct to the culture. Despite Newcomb's "Reappraisal," the article still left an impression that these cultures were rather inferior compared to their Central Mexican and Central Texan neighbors.

1960s

In the 1960s, amateur and professional archaeologists studied many artifacts from private collections. Even though the artifacts were no longer in context, they still added a lot of knowledge about South Texas prehistory (Hall et al. 1982:10). Two important surveys were done during this decade. One was an archaeological investigation carried out between 1964 and 1965 in Dimmit County. Twenty-six sites were recorded: nine were Archaic, two were "Neo-American," fourteen had artifacts from both the Archaic

and Neo-American, and one site provided no artifacts suitable for designating a time frame (Nunley and Hester 1966 cited in Hall et al. 1982:10). The other archaeological survey was a reconnaissance in 1967 at the Choke Canyon Reservoir in McMullen and Live Oak Counties. The reconnaissance was performed by Walter H. Wakefield of the Texas Archeological Salvage Project (Hall et al. 1982:10). Eighteen sites were recorded with artifacts from the Archaic as well as a few Historic artifacts (Hall et al. 1982:10).

Another significant find from the 1960s was the occurrence of prehistoric pottery in several sites in McMullen and Live Oak Counties. The presence of pottery was documented by T.R. Hester and T.C. Hill. Hester suggested that the South Texas peoples acquired the technology of pottery making from the Central Texas Toyah Focus peoples and the Coastal Texas Rockport Focus peoples (Hester 1969b cited in Hall et al. 1982:11). Also significant at the time was the discovery of Paleoindian projectile points found from surface collections in Dimmit, Atacosa, Frio and McMullen Counties (Taylor and Highley 1995:33).

In 1969 the Bulletin of the Texas Archaeological Society published a series of articles about the Ayala Site in Hidalgo County and the Floyd Morris Site in Cameron County. Both sites showed Brownsville Complex traits (Terneny 2005:28).

1970s

The 1970s and saw a rapid growth in the knowledge of South Texas archaeology. The amount of survey and excavation worked increased, especially in Zavala and Dimmit Counties (Hall et al. 1982:12). In 1970, survey and excavation started at Chaparrosa Ranch in Zavala County, and 58 new sites were documented. The site was worked on again during 1974 and 1975 as part of a summer field school program with The

University of Texas at San Antonio directed by Thomas R. Hester (Hall et al. 1982:13,16; Terneny 2005:33). Within Chaparrosa Ranch was one of the first sites in South Texas to have been extensively excavated, the Mariposa Site. The site was a Late Prehistoric site which may have gone as far back as the Archaic and which revealed activity areas associated with subsistence activities, such as hearths associated with faunal remains (Hall et al. 1982:16).

Also in 1970 was Prewitt's surface survey of Cameron County, preformed for the Texas Historical Commission, in which he recorded 79 sites. Prewitt also revisited 60 sites that had been recorded by A.E. Anderson. During his survey, Prewitt found a large shell manufacturing area which, due to the massive amount of shell artifacts being produced, led him to conclude to the theory that shell artifacts were a major export item (Terneny 2005:32,34).

The archaeological studies from the early 1970s led to a reconsideration of the prehistoric environmental setting. Records of early Spanish explorers gave insight to vegetational patterns in the early 17th century. Faunal remains from archaeological sites as well as the location of such sites were also studied. It was evident that there was a greater abundance of surface water such as streams and springs, but the faunal remains show little difference except that bison, antelope and bear are no longer present in the area. It was also concluded that mesquite had been in the area but had spread within the last 300 to 400 years, taking over the prehistoric savannah vegetation (Hall et al. 1982:13). Hester (1976:6-9) also suggested two adaptation models based on the ecology. One adaptation was the "savannah adaptation" describing inland cultures and the other

was the "maritime adaptation" describing coastal cultures. The two were similar but had slightly different artifacts based on the locally available resources.

In 1974 the Center for Archeological Research (CAR) at The University of Texas at San Antonio was created. In the same year the Southern Texas Archaeological Association (STAA) was also created. "Both of these developments were in large part due to the efforts of South Texas' first resident professional archeologist, Thomas R. Hester" (Taylor and Highley 1995:33). The STAA started to publish, and still publishes a journal, *La Tierra*, featuring short articles related to South Texas archaeology. Hester and T.C. Hill Jr. were responsible for a lot of the archaeological highlights during the 1970s, including some of the work on Chaparrosa Ranch (Taylor and Highley 1995:33-34).

In the 1980s construction of a drainage ditch in portions of Hidalgo and Willacy Counties exposed many archaeological sites. In 1985 a survey was conducted and 13 new sites were documented. An additional 30 sites were documented when another survey of the drainage ditch area was conducted in 1986.

After the 1970s

In 1980 Thomas Hester published a book titled *Digging into South Texas Prehistory: A Guide for Amateur Archaeologists*. The book discussed various South Texas artifacts in great detail. It teaches those who would normally be mere collectors how to properly document findings if they choose to do so (Hester 1980a). In 1981 the Hinojosa Site (to be discussed in more detail in chapter 3) in Jim Wells County was excavated. This site contained many sherds of prehistoric ceramics and appeared to be more closely related to the Toyah complex of Central Texas (Black 1986). From the

1970s onward, many publications about prehistoric South Texas were produced, including articles and books about artifacts, unique isolated finds, prehistoric environmental conditions, cemetery sites, camp sites and probable chronologies for the area. The STAA continues to publish articles in *La Tierra* and also occasionally holds field schools. Thanks to their efforts, interest and knowledge in South Texas archaeology can continue to increase.

Summary

The growth of archaeological knowledge in South Texas and Northeastern Mexico has been slow. In the 1930s most investigations were surface surveys such as A.E. Anderson's work and subsequent collection. Publications, likewise, were mainly focused on the distribution of artifacts. The "Coahuiltecan Branch" was defined by E.B. Sayles based on lithics artifacts but was later (1970s-1980s) realized to not be a homogenous group (Hall et al. 1982:7). Sayles also defined the "Brownsville Phase." In the 1940s the first publications regarding archaeological site investigations were produced. Richard S. MacNeish (1947) accidently contributed to the knowledge of the South Texas and Northeastern Mexico during his attempt to connect the cultures of Central Mexico with those of the eastern United States. During the 1950s, interest in the South Texas area began to grow with the construction of the Falcon Dam and Reservoir. Many sites were discovered due to the preparation for construction. Suhm et al. (1954) attempted to construct a chronology for Texas, but the South Texas area was missing what was called the Neo-American stage due to lack of pottery. This also changed as pottery was found later and chronology theories changed. In the 1960s artifacts from private collections were studied. Surveys in Dimmit County found small traces of

prehistoric pottery, proving that there was a "Neo-American" phase as defined by Suhm et al. (1954). The practice of pottery making may have been an influence from the Central Texan and Coastal Texan peoples (Hester 1969b cited in Hall et al. 1982:11). The 1970s marked a significant change in South Texas archaeology. Interest grew rapidly from the 1970s forward. Larger archaeological investigations were performed, and professionals began using ethnohistoric accounts from early Spanish explorers to help put the pieces together. It was concluded that the prehistoric environment was slightly different from the modern setting with more surface water, less mesquite, and larger game animals. The development of Center for Archeological Research and the Southern Texas Archaeological Association and their journal, La Tierra, would continue to increase the knowledge of the area, as they still do today.

CHAPTER III:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

The South Texas-Northeastern Mexico Archaeological area, as defined by Hester (1980:33), includes the northeastern portions of Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas, Mexico and goes up about half way between the Guadalupe River and Colorado River.

Figure 3.1. South Texas-Northeastern Mexico Archaeological Area. (*Source*: Hester 1980:33).

There was no one distinct culture in this area; instead there were hundreds of small groups or bands whose lifeways were similar. They had a loose form of social organization, subsisted off of hunting and gathering, did not practice agriculture, did not build large monuments, and did not keep domesticated animals, although dogs were the exception in some areas. Despite these factors the Indians of this area are not to be overlooked for they represent a way of life that had adapted well to the climate and resources of South Texas and survived in such a way for 11,000 or more years (Hester 1980a:38-39).

The South Texas-Northeastern Mexico Archaeological area is victim to poor preservation conditions and commercial, as well as casual, looters but it is not without its wonders. There are numerous archaeological sites throughout the area; and, although the archaeological record goes back as far as the Paleoindian Period, most sites are dated to the Archaic and Late Prehistoric Periods. There are no Paleoindian camps or sites found in the South Texas area; evidence of Paleoindian existence comes from widely spread Paleoindian artifacts, such as Folsom and Clovis points, found throughout the area typically as isolated finds (Hester 1995:434). The South Texas area contains occupation sites, workshop sites, temporary (one-time use) sites, isolated finds and caches, isolated burials, and cemeteries. There are also rock art sites but they are rare and only one is known to be in South Texas. The few others are found in parts of Northeastern Mexico (Hester 1980a:57-84).

Morhiss Site

The Morhiss Site, sometimes called the Morhiss Mound Site (41VT1) is located in Victoria County on the east bank of the Guadalupe River. It was first investigated in

1932 and excavated in 1938 to 1940 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). It is located on a knoll initially thought to be an artificially constructed mound that later was found to be natural (Perttula 2001:28; Terneny 2005:64). The site contained about 250 interments, making it one of the largest cemetery sites in South Texas. It has been dated to 2410 $\pm$ 50 BP, placing it in the Archaic Period around the same time as two other large South Texas cemetery sites, Loma Sandia (to be discussed later) and the Ernest Whitte Site (which, although is a large and significant site, falls too far north to be in the study area). Burials at this site came in different positions: bundled, flexed, and extended. Flexed burials were the most common. Twenty seven percent of the burials had grave goods (Perttula 2001:28). Grave goods included dart points, gouges, knives, drills, scrapers, choppers, flakes, manos, hematite, asphaltum, bone awls, bone flakers, bone beads, *Busycon* conch shell pendants, *Nerite* shell beads, a possible snake vertebrae necklace, antler flakers, an antler ornament, thousands of *Marginella apicina* shell beads, *Oliva sayana* shells and *Oliva Sayana* shell beads (Terneny 2005:64). One burial had grave goods indicating that the individual was likely a flint knapper: five antler billets, an antler tine flaker, an antler tip, unifaces, an abrader, long bone pins, a needle, tool fragments, a lump of asphaltum and a chert knife (Perttula 2001:28).

Analyses of the remains from the Morhiss Site indicate that the population buried here was generally in good health. There is little evidence of infectious disease or joint degeneration. Dental analyses showed a low carbohydrate diet. Three individuals stood out because they had surface attrition of the maxillary anterior teeth. Only two sites, including Morhiss, in North America have populations that have this dental attrition. It is more commonly found in Central and South American sites "where it is associated with

the processing of certain plant roots by drawing them across the surface of the teeth" (Perttula 2001:31). This may indicate that Central American peoples visited the South Texas area and perhaps stayed. It is possible that the three individuals with the dental attrition were processing local plant roots in a similar manner but no other documented human remains from South Texas show the same dental attrition pattern.

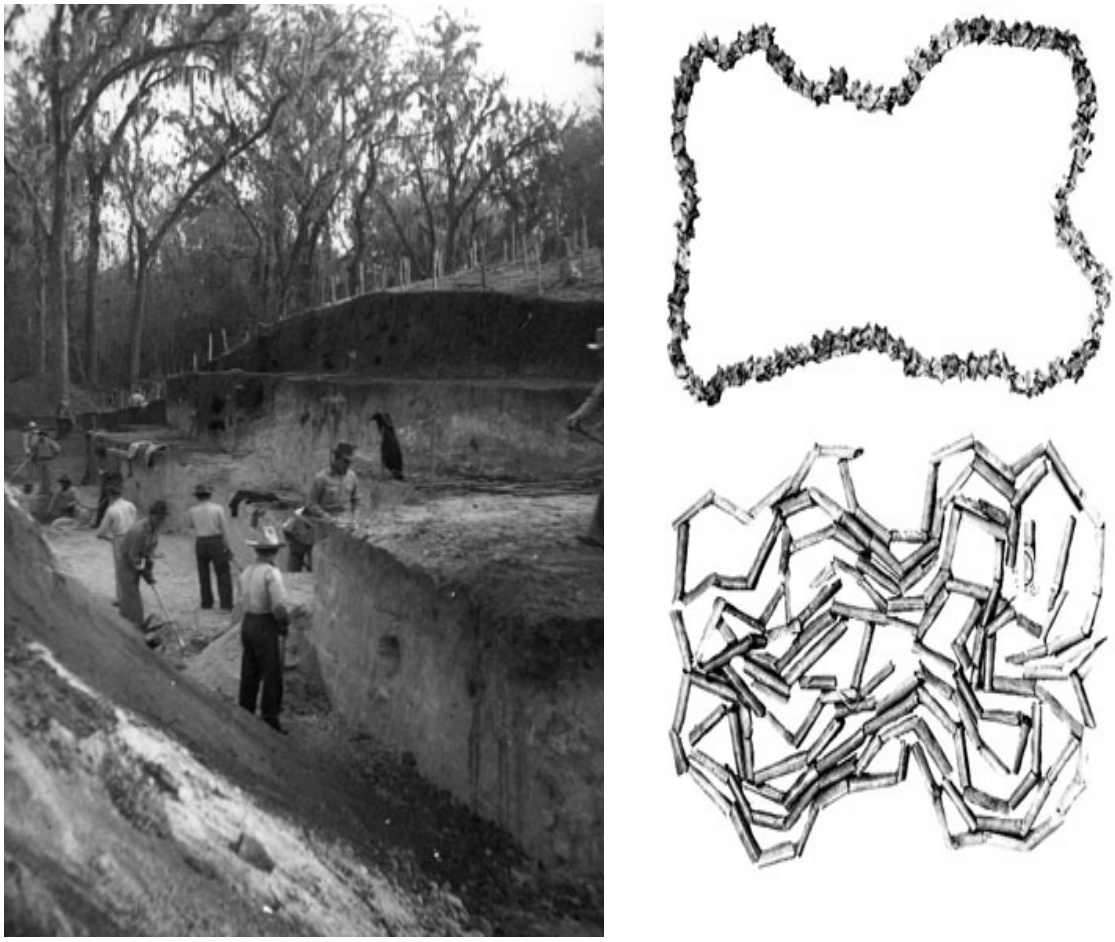

Figure 3.2. *Left*: WPA excavations, at the Morhiss site in 1938. Note height of the mound. *Right*: Two necklaces found with burials at Morhiss site, the top is a snake vertebrae necklace, the bottom is a bird bone necklace. (*Source*: www.texasbeyondhistory.net)

Loma Sandia

In 1977 the construction of Interstate Highway 37 near Three Rivers led to the discovery of a prehistoric cemetery. The Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation sent archaeologists to begin excavations at this site. The site became known as Loma Sandia (41LK28). After several months, more than 200 burials were discovered along with a large amount of grave goods making this an impressively large and significant cemetery for the South Texas area (Hester 1980a:82).

Loma Sandia lies near the confluence of the Frio, Atacosa, and Nueces Rivers in Live Oak County. It occupies a 144 square meter area and is believed to have been in use for about 300 years during the Middle Archaic (Perttula 2001:22).

The amount and variety of grave goods found at Loma Sandia is impressive. There were 191 burial features with an approximate total of 205 individuals. Ninety-nine of the burial features contained grave goods (Taylor and Highley 1995:663, 665). Researchers designated 251 groups of grave goods in Loma Sandia but only 158 were clearly associated with specific burial features (Taylor and Highley 1995:665). Some noted grave goods included 122 Tortugas points, 22 Lange points, 8 Abasolo points, 3 Morhiss points, 1 Carrizo point, 1 Palmillas point, 1 Refugio point, distally beveled tools, large, unstemmed bifaces, rattles, 32 hammerstones, numerous manos and grinding slabs, nine stone pipes, asphaltum, ocher, kaolin, bone tools, pipe stems, musical rasps, shark and stingray teeth, antler racks, and modified marine shell (Taylor and Highley 1995:650-657).

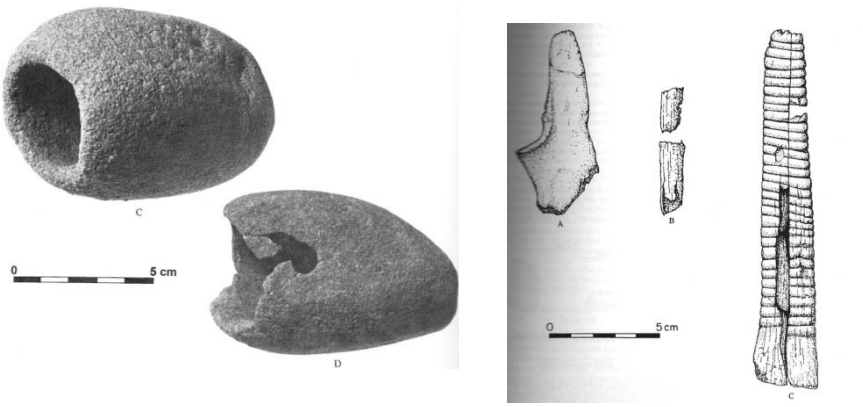

Figure 3.3. *Left*, Stone pipe from Loma Sandia. *Right*, bone rasp from Loma Sandia. (*Source* Taylor and Highly 1995:246,527)

Mortuary items were found with individuals of all ages and both sexes. The large majority of "durable mortuary items" were utilitarian and included: chipped stone, possible grinding slabs, manos, and bone tools. Few of the grave goods were ornamental. Other grave goods may have served ritualistic purposes; these items included: rattlers, ground ocher, gypsum crystals, unmodified bones, antlers, and shark and stingray teeth. Most grave goods were made of local materials, but a few were from other regions such as the Gulf coast and Central Texas (Taylor and Highley 1995:665-666). Gender differences among grave goods were difficult to ascertain because many of the burials were too disturbed or in otherwise very poor condition to determine sex. It does seem that only adult females were buried with lumps of asphaltum, Abasolo points, and shark teeth. Adult-male-only grave goods appear to have been ritualistic items such as antler racks, rattles, and pipes. Males also appeared to have been buried with larger concentrations of Tortugas points (Taylor and Highley 1995:666).

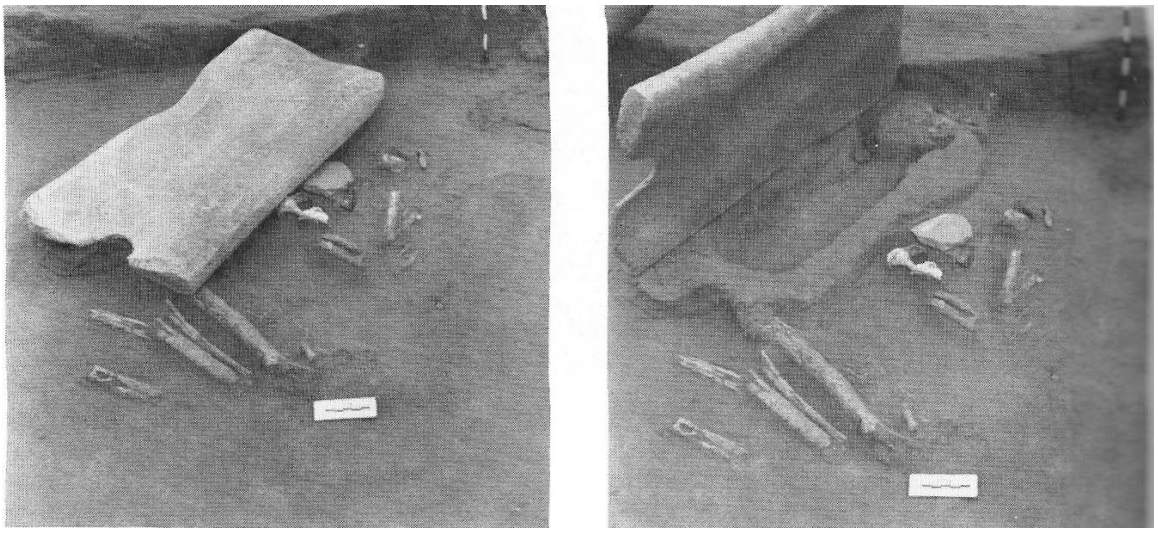

Figure 3.4. Burial from Loma Sandia with a grinding slab. (*Source* Taylor and Highley 1995:214)

Many of the skeletal remains were in poor condition. From the remains that were available the sex of only 75 individuals could be determined: 23 were female, 8 possibly female, 39 were male and 5 possibly male. Although the age range varied between infant and 60 years of age, most individuals at the site were between 30-39 years of age at death. The next most common range was 20-29 years old (Taylor and Highley 1995:372).

The poor preservation of skeletal material made it difficult to discover pathological conditions from remains at Loma Sandia. Dental disorders were found in some of the remains and included: enamel hypoplasia, incomplete development of the permanent teeth, and dental caries (Taylor and Highley 1995:361). The direction the burials were facing was determined by the orientation of skulls. Most skulls were orientated towards the south, followed by north, west and east respectively (Shoup 1979 cited in Taylor and Highley 1995:362). From the few burials whose burial positions could be determined, the majority were tightly flexed or flexed positions (Taylor and

Highley 1995:363). This burial position is similar to burials found south of Loma Sandia in the Rio Grande Delta. Burials north of Loma Sandia tend to be buried primarily in extended positions (Terneny 2005:58). This may show that the Nueces River is the cultural boundary for the South Texas area rather than the Brazos-Colorado River as is believed by some researchers.

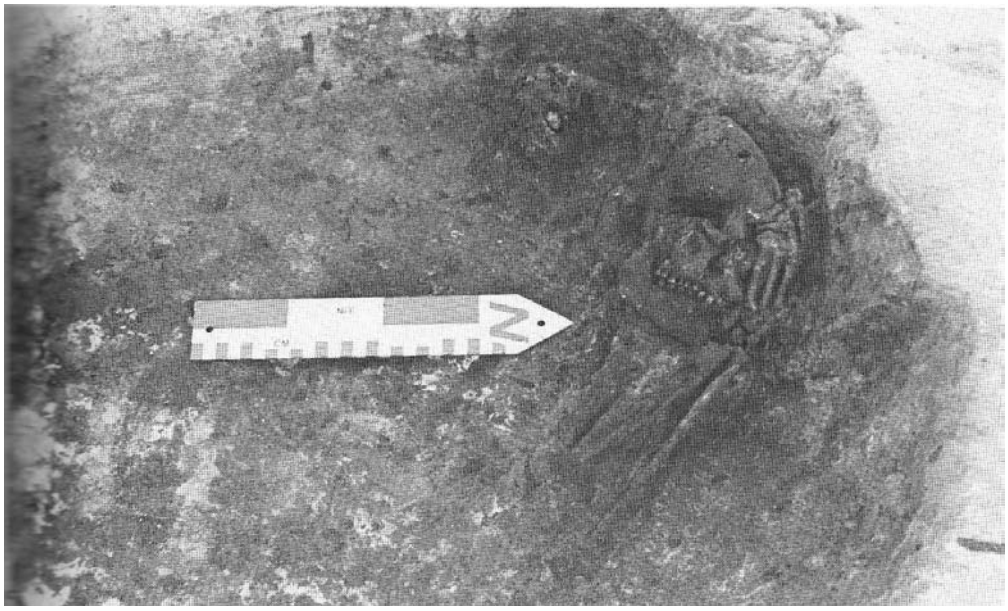

Figure 3.5. Cremation burial from Loma Sandia. (*Source*: Taylor and Highley 1995:317)

Ayala Site

The Ayala Site (41HG1) is located in Hidalgo County on the Sardinas Resaca and is one of the most significant cemetery sites in South Texas (Terneny 2005:3,100). The site was discovered in 1948 when land owner M.E. Ayala uncovered three human burials during a construction project. The first investigation of the site was performed by Jack Frizzell, a graduate student from The University of Texas at Austin, in July of 1948 (Terneny 2005:100). Frizzell had to work alone under harsh climate conditions and a short time frame, therefore his notes are not too detailed but they do provide an overview of eleven burials. The burials were simply labeled Burial 1, Burial 2 and so on. Burials 1

through 9 were all single flexed burials, and only Burial 8 contained artifacts in the form of beads. Red ochre was found on the skull and long bones of Burial 1. Burial 8 was an adult female with evidence of a strong hit to the front-right portion of the skull, likely the cause of death. The beads consisted of 60 *Oliva sayana* shell beads, two *Busycon* conch beads and 32 bone beads. Burial 10 was a group burial containing two adults and three children. All were in a flexed position with forearms crossed except for one burial whose arms were adjacent to the face. One child was interred with a necklace of bone beads and one adult with a necklace of bone and shell beads. Burial 11 was an infant; no other information was provided (Terneny 2005:108-111).

Another investigation of the Ayala site was conducted by Frederick Ruecking in 1952. Ruecking noted the locations of many burials, and investigated a few as well. Ruecking excavated with a grid system and worked in 6 inch increments/levels. With this method he uncovered artifacts that were not associated with burials such as projectile points, flakes, burned rock, chert debitage, and scrapers (Terneny 2005:112-114). There were discrepancies between Frizzell's notes and Ruecking's notes which have made the exact number of burials difficult to decipher. Ruecking also noted the burials he investigated as Burial 1, Burial 2, etc. Ruecking's Burial 1 has no mention of positioning, but it was found in association with several artifacts including deer antler, a conch shell ornament, an incised bone ornament, sea shell ornament, canine tooth ornament, 19 bone beads and two projectile points. Burial 2 was not associated with any artifacts. Burial 3 was found with a necklace made of 76 bone beads, and the remains appeared to be flexed but no cranial remains were found (Ruecking 1952:4-15 cited in Terneny 2005:116-118). Ruecking listed five burials (Burial 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6) but he

illustrated a sixth burial (Burial 7) in his notes. Ruecking sketched a site map with locations of burials; the total number of burials on his map was 44. Both Ruecking and Frizzell had difficulty keeping track of burials because workers on Mr. Ayala's property continued construction thereby disturbing the remains. Between the 1948 and 1952 notes, there appear to be a total of seventeen burials containing a total of twenty-two individuals (Terneny 2005:135-136). According to the artifacts found in the artificial levels set in place by Ruecking, it appears the Ayala Site was in use from the Archaic Period through to the Late Prehistoric Period.

Southern Island Site

The Southern Island Site is located on the northern portion of the Falcon Reservoir in Tamaulipas, Mexico about 8 km south of Zapata (Boyd and Perttula 2000:9). The site was exposed in 1995 when water levels in the reservoir dropped and it was investigated by archaeologists soon after. Eight or nine burials were found at this site (Terneny 2005:52-53). Burial 1 contained the remains of a child about ten years old at death. Associated with the burial was a stone pipe and a bone tube. The bone tube, made from the medial section of a human ulna, is believed to have served as a pipe stem. Another human bone artifact was found in this burial and that was a modified distally severed humerus. Although the function of this artifact is unknown, it has been polished and reamed out. This was the only burial at the site to have artifacts made from human bone; generally, human bone artifacts are uncommon in the South Texas area (Boyd 2006:89-90). Burial 1 also contained many dart points of various kinds, over 500 bone beads, five bone rasps, an antler billet, a bone awl, three coyote teeth beads, four animal claws, and various shell beads and pendants (Terneny 2005:53). Burials 2 and 3

contained Caracara arrow points. Burial 2 was a young adult male around 18 to 19 years old at time of death. The burial contained a large number of artifacts including over a thousand bird bone beads, 140 coyote teeth beads, and arrow point fragments that, when reconstructed, formed two large Caracara points. Burial 3 is that of an adult male 34-44 years of age at death. The skeletal remains were almost complete, and the individual was in a flexed fetal position. The burial contained a Clear Fork gouge and a Caracara point was found deeply embedded in the second lumber vertebra.

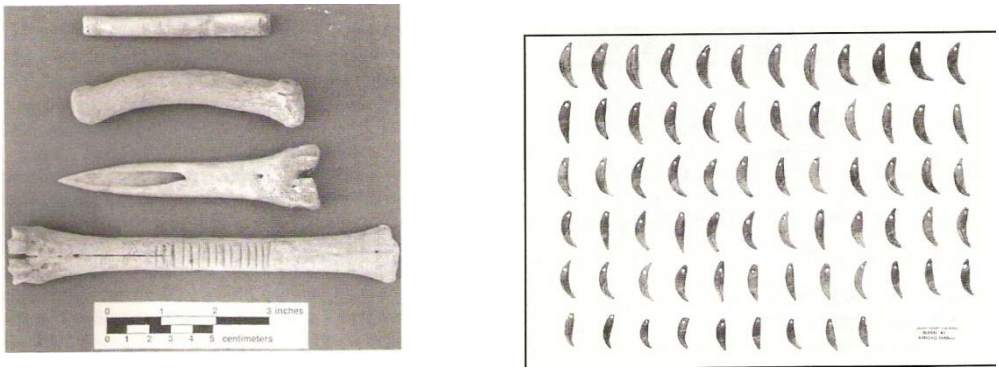

Figure 3.6. *Left,* Bone tools from Southern Island Site, Tamaulipas, Mexico. *Right*, Canine tooth beads from Southern Island Site, Tamaulipas Mexico (*Source* Perttula and Boyd 1998:11).

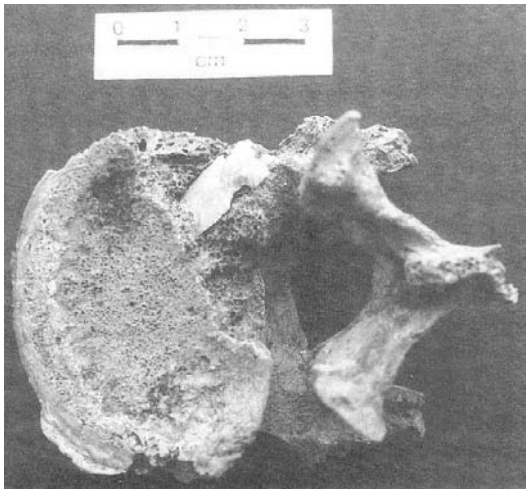

Figure 3.7. Carcara point embedded in the second lumber vertebra of Southern Island Burial 3. (Source: Boyd and Perttula 2000:10)

Samples from the site were radiocarbon dated to AD 1025-1292, the Late Prehistoric Period. Other sites from the Late Archaic and Late Prehistoric periods in both Central and South Texas seem to be marked by signs of violence between groups; however, the violence appears to be on a very small scale so it probably reflected small groups competing for resources (Boyd and Perttula 2000:9-12; Terneny 2005:53). Burials 4 and 5 were in poor condition and the remains are scattered. Burial 6 was highly disturbed by looters. Burial 7 contained a conch shell pendant. Burial 8 contained dart points and over 500 bone beads. The artifacts found at the Southern Island site are similar to items found at the Morris Site and the Ayala Site (Terneny 2005:53).

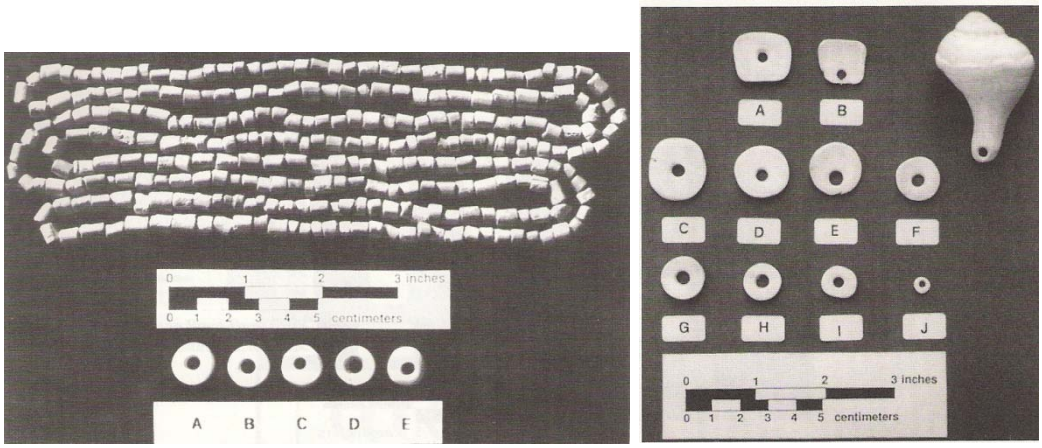

Figure3.8. *Left*, bird bone and shell beads from a Falcon Reservoir collection. *Right*, shell beads and conch shell pendant from a Falcon Reservoir collection (*Source* Perttula and Boyd 1998:9).

Floyd Morris Site

The Floyd Morris Site (41CF2) is located in Cameron County outside Harlingen, Texas; it was discovered during a land leveling operation in the 1960s. It is a Late Prehistoric Period cemetery site (Hester 1980a:73). In 1966, Michael Collins, Frank Weird and Gentry Steele went to the site in an attempt to document as many burials as possible while land leveling activities were progressing. The land leveling was

progressing in 30 m X 30 m squares, and the investigators were able to take advantage of this organization to search for burials (Terneny 2005:157-158).

The most interesting burial from this site is Burial 11, a multiple burial containing the remains of four people. The first interment, Burial 11A, was an older interment that was disturbed by Burials 11B, 11C and 11D. Burial 11B was that of a young female, about 15-16 years of age at death. She was positioned resting on her back with shoulders and upper back slightly elevated and legs loosely flexed. Her arms were flexed along her body with her hands resting between the thighs and above her pelvis. Resting on her abdominal region was Burial 11C, a bundle burial of an adult male, about 40 years of age or older. The remains of this bundle burial are not complete. The remains were coated with an unidentified dark substance and painted with a red pigment. Some of the long bones had been cut and plugged with pieces of asphaltum. Only the top part of the skull was present, and it appeared to have been modified. Beneath this bundle burial, within the pelvis of Burial 11B, were the remains of either a newborn infant or a fetus. Grave goods included 300 bone beads, many made of human bone, as well as some shell beads and other bone beads scattered along the bones of the bundle burial.

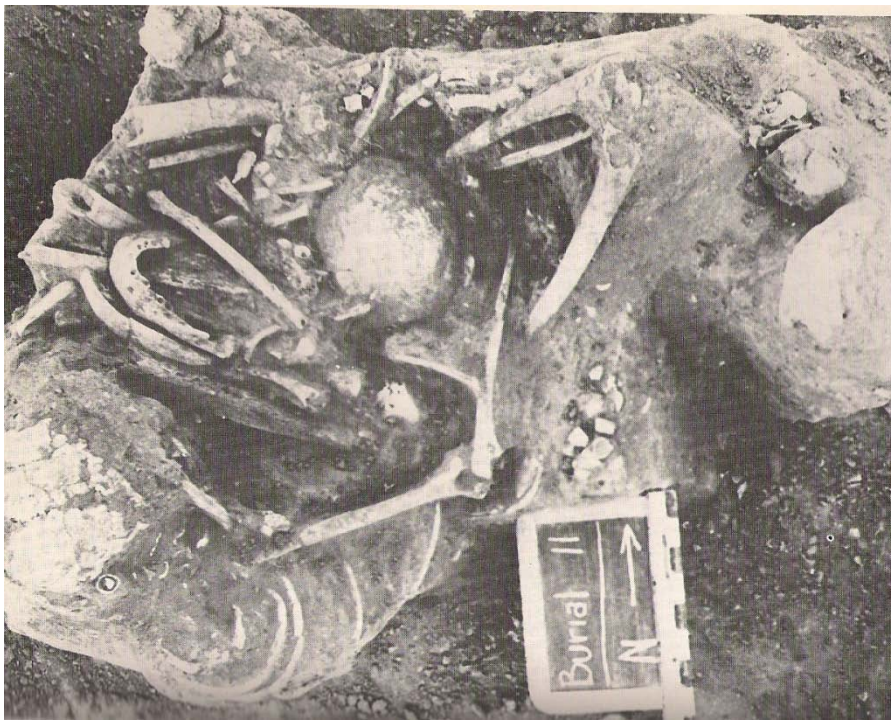

Figure 3.9. Floyd Morris Site, Burial 11. (*Source*: Hester 1980:75)

Although the exact circumstances that led to such a unique burial cannot be determined, it is a possibility that the young female died during childbirth and was buried along with her child, even if the child was born healthy. Early Spaniards recorded this practice (burying a newborn infant with the mother if the mother died during childbirth) among Coahuilteco peoples of the lower Rio Grande Valley. The Floyd Morris Site is a Late Prehistoric Period site belonging to a culture known as the Brownsville Complex. It is not known if the Carrizo, the Coahuiltecan group that lived in Cameron County during the Early Historic Period, were linked to the Brownsville Complex peoples, but it is a possibility, and would explain part of this complex burial. It is also possible that the young female died before childbirth. As for the bundle burial in the female's lap, the relation could not be determined, but the treatment of the bones does show that they must have had some significance. The bones may have belonged to the female's husband,

father or some other relative who had died earlier and whose remains were exhumed to be reburied with her (Hester 1980a:73-76; Terneny 2005:168).

The site also contained some lithic artifacts not associated with any burials including a Tortugas dart point, a Matamoros dart point, a triangular knife, and an end scraper. A jadeite bead was also found near Burial 1 (Terneny 2005:171). The jadeite bead is significant because jadeite is not a local resource and so must have been imported or obtained through trade with the Mesoamerican Huastec peoples (Hester 1995:447).

Hinojosa Site

The Clemente and Herminia Hinojosa Site (41JW8), or simply the Hinojosa site, is a Late Prehistoric campsite located in Jim Wells County on the Chiltipin Creek. It was first recorded in 1974 during a survey of land to be affected by flood control projects. It was not excavated until 1981 because the owners of the property believed a rumor of buried treasure hidden by their ancestors. Negotiations took many months (Black 1986:1-2). Portions of the site were disturbed by plowing and the construction of a fence (Black 1986:10). A study of springs in Texas documented 10 dry springs, several of which were located within a few hundred meters of the Hinojosa site. Because these springs were active fewer than hundred years ago, it made the Hinojosa site an ideal spot for occupation. The Hinojosa site would have also been surrounded by a variety of nearby habitats in prehistoric times like riparian and savannah microenvironments (Black 1986:24, 31).

Most “cultural debris” found at the Hinojosa Site was lithic materials. Few lithic materials were locally available, meaning that the materials were brought in from many kilometers away. Most of the lithic artifacts were made of siliceous materials and the

closest source was 35 km to the east-northeast and 45 km north-northwest in Duval County (Black 1986:45). Sixteen Perdiz points were found at the Hinojosa Site. Perdiz points are made using pressure flaking and heat-treatment (Black 1986:57). Other lithic artifacts found at the site were several hammerstones and chipped stone tools made from volcanic materials, burned rock (usually the outline of a hearth feature), stone cores, debitage, triangular arrow points, beveled knives, Olmos bifaces (function unknown), scrapers, hammerstones, abraders, a sandstone pipe bowl (Black 1986:45-89).

Seven hundred and eleven prehistoric ceramic fragments were found at this site as well. This is one of the largest samples of prehistoric ceramics in the South Texas. Unfortunately most examples are tiny sherds less than 2 cm in diameter, but there are a few larger sherds. These ceramics, like many prehistoric ceramics found in South Texas, were bone-tempered, with the exception of four samples. The decoration was reminiscent of Rockport ware ceramics (red filing or asphaltum painting), usually associated with coastal groups; and this suggests contact with coastal peoples (Black 1986:89, 90). Another ceramic artifact also found appears to be a part of a locally manufactured figurine with punctuated and incised line decoration (Black 1986:94).

Bone artifacts were also found at the Hinojosa site. These included four deer ulna tools, three of which have use wear patterns that are consistent with use as pressure flaking tools. A bone needle and seven bird bone beads were also found (Black 1986:101-102). In addition, a few modified shell artifacts were found, and most appear to be fragments of shell tools or ornaments (Black 1986:102).

There were also a number of baked clay lumps found at the Hinojosa site. Such lumps do occur in other sites around South Texas. The function of the lumps is not

known although there are several theories. The most widely accepted theory is that these lumps are accidently made when the heat of a fire bakes a clay rich soil underneath (Black 1986:97).

Five burned rock and charcoal features were recorded in 1981. These were likely cooking hearths and/or warmth hearths. They were often associated with faunal remains (Black 1986:197). Five bone clusters were found at the site and are believed to be discard piles from meat processing or meat consumption (Black 1986:189). Faunal remains at the site are varied consisting of many types of birds, reptiles, small mammals, collared peccary, bison and, most of all, deer. The remains indicate that the site was occupied for half of the year during the spring and summer. There is no evidence that the site was occupied during the fall and winter. However, the lack of evidence does not prove that the site was unoccupied during the fall and winter (Black 1986:124). There was definite evidence of repeated occupation (Black 1986:239). Plant remains are not common in South Texas archaeological sites due to poor preservation conditions; however, at the Hinojosa site burned and charred plant remains were found. These consisted of burned hackberry and persimmon wood. Several charred seeds were also found such as persimmon seeds, *Chenopodium berlandieri* seeds, and sunflower seeds (Black 1986:143).

Only two living surfaces were recognized. These were identified by large accumulations of, "artificial material vertically clustered on more or less level surfaces" (Black 1986:210). Both living surfaces were disturbed by plowing but contained large quantities of cultural material. Black (1986:211) believes that more living surfaces could be found with further, large scale excavations.

The significance of the Hinojosa site is that its artifact assemblage is similar to the Toyah culture of Central Texas. Common artifacts include the Perdiz arrow points, beveled knives, scrapers, and flake drills (Black 1986:256). The only other site in South Texas to have such features is the Possum Hollow site near Three Rivers. How did these artifacts end up in South Texas? Black, Hester, and Eaton (1980 cited in Black 1986:254) proposed that the campsites in South Texas with Toyah artifacts were due the Toyah culture peoples following bison herds from Central Texas to South Texas.

Beacon Harbor Lodge Site

The Beacon Harbor Lodge Site (41ZP7) is located in Zapata County on the banks of the Falcon Reservoir. It is a Late Prehistoric burial site, but it is rather small, consists of the remains of six individuals (Terneny 2005:51). Despite being classified as a burial site, the Beacon Harbor Lodge Site shows evidence of heavy occupation in the prehistoric past. There are large amounts of burned rock, lithic debitage, discarded mussel shells, arrow points and dart points. A marine shell cache was found in May 1985 consisting of ten shell beads and a small conch shell pendant. The cache was not associated with a burial. Most of the burials at the Beacon Harbor Lodge Site were not associated with grave goods, although one burial containing the remains of an adult male and an infant did have numerous mortuary offerings including a large number of bone beads, marine shell beads, Caracara arrow points, small bifaces and seven human perforated teeth (Boyd 1998:41-43; Boyd 2006:92).

The Caracara arrow points (3) were found within the rib cage of an adult male in his twenties or early thirties at time of death. This means that either the Caracara points were already within the chest cavity at the time of burial and caused his death; or the

points, likely attached to arrows, were placed on the chest of the individual at the time of burial as an offering (Boyd and Perttula 2000:8). Caracara points are not often found in this area (Falcon Reservoir) of South Texas; but, when they are, they seem to be found within the rib cages of the skeletal remains. In one case at the Southern Island Site, a Caracara point was embedded deep within vertebrae of one body. Caracara points are more common in regions near Falcon Reservoir so their presence in these burials may indicate some hostilities between local tribes (Boyd and Perttula 2000:12).

The same burial that contained the Caracara arrow points also contained seven human perforated teeth that were biconically drilled to form holes and were likely strung on a necklace. This is the only known site and burial to contain human teeth beads. Most teeth beads found throughout the Lower Rio Grande Valley are made from coyote teeth (Boyd 2006:92,96).

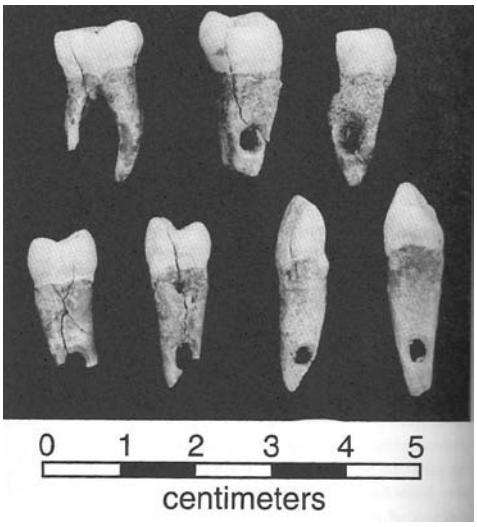

Figure 3.10. Seven perforated, biconically drilled human teeth from the Beacon Harbor Lodge. (*Source*: Boyd 2006:92).

CHAPTER IV

AN ARCHAEOLGICAL CHRONOLOGY OF SOUTH TEXAS

Despite the many archaeological sites in South Texas, building a solid cultural sequence is unlikely. The prehistoric South Texas Indians did not have a large or elaborate culture. They lived in small bands, many having slight cultural differences from one another. Due to these circumstances, the chronology of prehistoric South Texas is general, not specific (Terneny 2005:99).

Another problem with the chronology of prehistoric South Texas has to do with the conditions of the archaeological sites themselves, as well as major problems with looting. South Texas, being a subtropical region, leaves behind little in the way of organic based artifacts such as plant fiber crafts or wooden utensils, so such artifacts are recorded only in historical accounts. Many of the sites are open occupation sites and so have been heavily eroded. Erosion brings many artifacts to the surface where they can easily be picked up by looters or recreational collectors. The artifacts most commonly picked up are projectile points, and commercial looters can easily obtain collections ranging into many thousands of specimens (Hester 1995:429). In the Lower Rio Grande the looting problem became more pronounced in the 1950s when the construction of Falcon Dam and Reservoir caused water levels to drop. These looters were typically only interested in acquiring large amounts of projectile points for personal collections. However, by the 1980s, with another period of low water, commercial looting at the

Falcon Reservoir became a lucrative industry bringing commercial looters $30,000-$70,000 a year in tax-free income.

Record low water levels in the mid-1990s exposed hundreds of sites, historic and prehistoric, on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. As a result, many sites were damaged by looters and exposure. Looters not only collect projectile points, they take other artifacts such as bone beads, tubular stone pipes, human and animal bone tools and perforated canine teeth, sometimes destroying exposed human remains on the way. Not all human remains are destroyed because there is also a market for human remains, especially intact human skulls from prehistoric burials (Perttula and Boyd 1998:6-8). On the Mexican side there are even guided boat-tours where patrons can, for a fee, have an opportunity to stop and collect projectile points (Hester 1996:2). It would be almost impossible to stop looting completely but it is possible to promote looters to record and document their findings and perhaps temporarily lend their collections to professional archaeologists for further study (Hester 1980a:165).

Another major factor in site destruction is construction. South Texas is a fast growing area so the landscape is being altered, dams are being built, new highways and roads are being constructed, and new subdivisions and sewer systems are also being built. Although this process can destroy sites it also uncovers them. Contract archaeologists can then study the sites. If a site is considered to be important and irreplaceable then construction may be reworked or postponed until proper study of the site is completed (Hester 1980a:165-166).

In 1954 Suhm, Krieger and Jelks divided a chronological framework into four stages: Paleo-American, Archaic, Neo-American and the Historic (Suhm et al. 1954:15-

21). As far as South Texas was concerned, there was no Neo-American stage as the stage was defined by the presence of pottery and in the 1950s it had not yet been discovered that the prehistoric South Texas Indians did in fact make pottery. More modern chronological models have slightly different divisions: the Paleo-Indian period, the Pre-Archaic period, the Early Archaic period, the Middle Archaic period, the Late Archaic period, the Late Prehistoric period, and Protohistoric period, and the Historic period (Hester 1995:429-450). Transitional periods such as the Pre-Archaic and the Protohistoric tend to be vague and have little relevant information and therefore will not be discussed here. The three major prehistoric time frames shall be discussed: the Paleo-Indian period, the Archaic period, and the Late Prehistoric period. A brief overview of the Historic period shall be given below but more detailed information can be found in Chapter V.

The Paleo-Indian Period

The Paleo-Indian period ranges from about 9500-6000 BC, or 11500-8000 YBP (Terneny 2005:94). Sea levels during this time, the Late Pleistocene, were lower than at present so Paleo-Indian occupation sites "may have extended some distance onto the now-inundated continental shelf" (Hester 1976:3).

During this period, in South Texas and adjacent Northeastern Mexico, there may have been two major cultural traditions: the *Plains-related tradition*, and the *Small Projectile Point Tradition*. The Plains-related tradition is the most visible. Its technology and cultural patterns are related to the Paleo-Indian cultures of the Great Plains and the Southwest. Clovis and Folsom points represent the Plains-related tradition in South Texas, but these points are very rarely found below the Rio Grande (Hester 1980a:134).

The highest concentration of Clovis points is found in the northern part of the Rio Grande Plain while Folsom points are found in the same area and further south as well (Hester 1976:3). This reflects a lifeway that was found across the Plains, Southwest and portions of South Texas (Hester 1980a:136). The presence of Clovis points in South Texas suggest that human occupation in the area began at least 11,200 years ago (Hester 1995:433).

Typically, Clovis points are known to be associated with faunal remains of mammoth. However, in South Texas, no mammoth kill or butchering sites are found in association with Clovis points. Mammoth remains are found in areas around South Texas creeks, but they have never been found with human artifacts. Folsom kill sites have not been located either but Folsom points have been found as far south as Webb County and near Falcon Lake (Hester 1995:434). Both mammoth and mastodon remains are found in South Texas but, as they are not found in association with human artifacts, may have died out by the time man arrived in the area; this is not confirmed (Hester 1976:3).

The Small Projectile Point tradition occurs at the same time as the Plains-related tradition but is more distinct to Northeastern Mexico. The tradition was first defined by Jeremiah F. Epstein in the 1960s. Epstein and his students did not find Plains-related tradition fluted points in Northeastern Mexico. The extent of the Small Projectile Point tradition is unknown but it may extend north into part of South Texas (Hester 1980a:136). The Small Projectile Point tradition is unrelated to cultural patterns on the Plains and may have influenced the adaptive patterns of South Texas (Hester 1981:121).

Defining cultural patterns becomes difficult during the late Paleo-Indian period in South Texas. By this time the Ice Age was over and the environment was more similar to

the modern day condition, although not exactly. Despite the change in environment, it appears that earlier lifeways persisted, including the same stone-chipping methods used in the early Paleo-Indian period, but there were more projectile point types such as: Plainview, Golondrina, Scottsbluff, and Angostura (Hester 1980a:137). Plainview and Golondrina points are difficult to distinguish from each other but Plainview are believed to be from about 10,000 YBP while Golondrina from about 9,000 or 7,000 BC. Golondrina points are also widespread in Northeastern Mexico. Scottsbluff points are typical of the Plains and east Texas but they are also scattered around South Texas, notably in Victoria County. Angostura point types are also common throughout southern Texas (Hester 1995:435-436; Hester 1981:121; Hester 1980a:138).

The available data is too limited to make good assumptions about Paleo-Indian lifeways in South Texas. There is no direct evidence that the natives had hunted mega fauna although such lifeways were typical of Paleo-Indians in areas further north; they may have been non-specialized hunters and gatherers (Hester 1976:4). By 6000 BC the South Texas population had increased and the environment had become drier and warmer (Hester 1980a:146). Cultural patterns started to change. The Pre-Archaic period is not well known in South Texas and the only well known site with Pre-Archaic evidence is Chaparrosa Ranch (Hall et al. 1982:23).

The Archaic Period

The Archaic period ranges from 6000 BC to AD 800, or 8000 to 1200 YBP (Terneny 2005:95). According to Hester (1980a:149), "No single period epitomizes the hunting and gathering lifeway more than the Archaic." This does not mean that the Paleo-Indian population had a different means of subsistence, but rather, that this lifestyle

significantly improved by the Archaic. Technologies were developed that were better suited for hunting local fauna and the gathering of wild plant foods became more organized and better scheduled (Hester 1980a:149). The Archaic period environment is unknown but Ralph Robinson of the University of Texas at San Antonio studied soil samples, containing phytoliths, from Archaic sites. Phytoliths are microscopic bodies found in plants that are less prone to decay than the rest of the plant; they are found in many grasses and trees and can be used to determine what plants were present at a site. Based on the types of grasses he found, he believes that the Archaic had varying periods of moist and dry conditions. Wood charcoal found in Archaic archaeological sites has shown that oak, hackberry and mesquite were utilized. Mesquite was likely confined to the forested areas along streams and had not spread until Late Prehistoric or Early Historic times (Hester 1980a:150, 154).

Resources were not annual, the exception being water which flowed in the rivers and creeks year round. Bands would have to move up or down stream to more preferred sites depending on the season and available resources. This mobile lifestyle has created many Archaic sites throughout South Texas, sometimes giving the illusion that large populations were present (Hester 1980a:150,152). Although preservation of faunal remains has been poor in South Texas, excavated materials from Zavala County and McMullen County revealed a large number of species such as snake, rabbit, deer, small mammals, land snails, and freshwater mussels (Hall et al. 1982:24).

Projectile points were common in Archaic sites but the bow and arrow did not appear until about AD 1000. Archaic peoples made use of the atlatl, used to throw short spears tipped with triangular shaped dart points. These dart points are the most

commonly found artifacts. Common South Texas Archaic dart points include: the triangular Tortugas, the unstemmed, round-based Abasolo and Catán, and the small triangular Matamoros. Other dart points present in the archaeological record, although less common were: Desmuke, Carrizo, Langtry, Shumla, Pedernales, Frio and Ensor points (Hester 1980a:152; Hall et al. 1982:24). Other stone tools were used in the Archaic period, although many people mistake these as unfinished artifacts as many of these stone tools were crudely made. The most common of these tools was the Clear Fork tool; a chipped stone tool that was flat on one side and convex on the other. End and side scrapers, choppers, hammerstones, manos and metates are other types of stone tools found in Archaic sites (Hester 1980a:152; Hall et al. 1982:24).

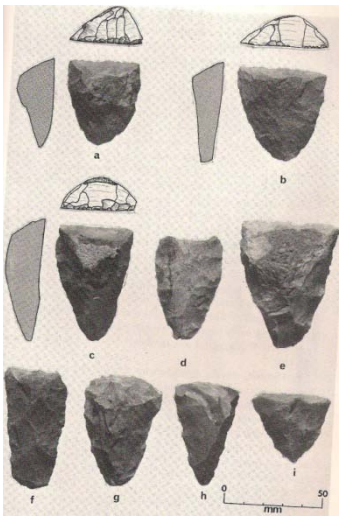

Figure 4.1. Clear Fork tools from Dimmit County.
(*Source* Hester 1980a:111)

It is extremely likely that the Archaic peoples used many wooden tools as well, but due to poor preservation conditions, many of these artifacts have not survived. Early Spanish explorers did record that the Indians used wooden tools; if this was true for the Late Prehistoric and Early Historic periods, then it would be obvious that the Archaic

peoples also made wooden tools. There is no archaeological data on housing. The Archaic peoples probably had temporary shelters consisting of plant materials and/or animal skin, which, like wooden tools, have not survived. Hearths, consisting of chert and sandstone, are visible traces of Archaic dwellings and may have been where activities were focused as artifacts are typically found clustered around them (Hester 1980a:153-154).

South Texas archaeologists have made some assumptions about Archaic lifeways. Hester (1980a:151) gives the following description on how the South Texas Archaic Indians may have lived by relating them to Australian Aborigines and Southern African Bushmen:

> "In these groups (Australian Aborigines and Southern African Bushmen), the men go out to hunt and the women and children go collect plant foods, small animals and dig up roots. In the evening, around smoky campfires, they talk about what they observed during the day…animals using a certain waterhole, a favorite hunting area in which game is now absent, a grove of trees rich in nuts. All of this information is assembled and sorted in their minds to enable them to plan their hunting and gathering activities for the next day and for the days ahead. So must it have been among the Archaic peoples of South Texas. Along with this went knowledge accumulated since birth, passed along from generation to generation, of when prickly pear fruit would ripen and where, about the availability of pecans….of special places suited to the hunting and ambush of whitetail deer, and where good flint could be found for making tools. It was not a haphazard way of life; these were not savages who lived from hand-to-mouth each day. Rather, they were equipped with brains as large as our own and with all the mental processes we possess" (Hester 1980a:151).

Early Archaic

The Early Archaic (6000 BC—2500 BC; 8000—4500 YBP) in South Texas is defined by two horizons: the *Early Corner Notched Horizon* and the *Early Basal*

Notched Horizon (Hester 1995:436, Terneny 2005:95). The Early Corner Notched Horizon is poorly known and is represented by corner notched points; the points are found in the region but with no recognizable pattern. Early Corner Notched Horizon points have been found at Chaparrosa Ranch on high terraces overlooking Turkey and Chaparrosa creeks (Hester 1995:436). Early Basal Notched Horizon points tend to have deep basal notches, large barbs and long stems. Bell and Andice are two recognized types, although there are other types as well. Evidence of the Early Basal Notched Horizon can be found along the South Texas coast, across the Rio Grande Plain and in Northeastern Mexico. Clear Fork tools are sometimes found with Early Basal points and are part of the same horizon (Hester 1995:437). Aside from these two horizons, the Early Archaic is not well recognized in South Texas.

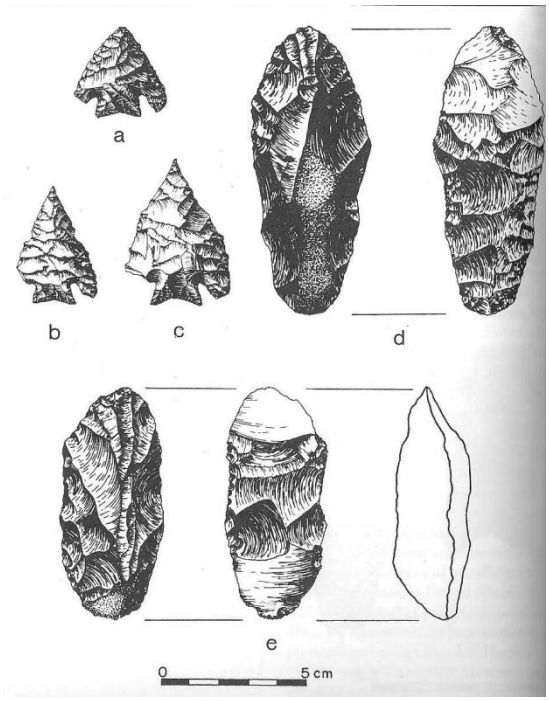

Figure 4.2. Early Corner-Notched Horizon artifacts (*Source* Hester 1995:437).

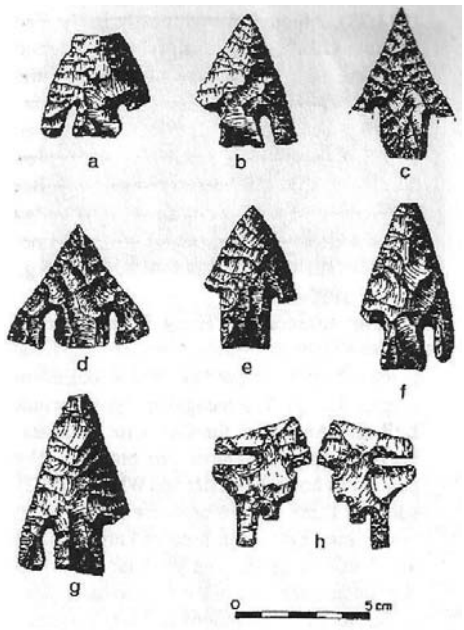

Figure 4.3. Early Basal Notched Horizon artifacts (*Source* Hester 1995:438).

Middle Archaic

The Middle Archaic dates between 2500-400 BC, 4500-2400 YBP (Terneny 2005:95, Hall et al. 1986). South Texas Middle Archaic sites are identified by stemmed points which can be cross-dated with stemmed points from Central Texas, the Lower Pecos Region, and the central coastal plain (Hester 1995:438). Middle Archaic dart points are the Tortugas, Abasolo and Carrizo points. Stemmed point types include Pedernales, Lange, Langtry and Morhiss. Tubular stone pipes from Zapata County, and Tamaulipas, Mexico in the Falcon Reservoir area, are believed to date from the Middle Archaic as well (Terneny 2005:96-97). Sites tend to be located along stream channels or former stream channels, and in Starr County the site tend to be located on terraces, arroyo banks, or hilly areas overlooking the arroyos (Hester 1995:438).

The charcoal analyses from Mid-Archaic hearths suggest the use of mesquite beans, acacia, oak and hackberry (Hester 1995:439).

The Middle Archaic is known for having fairly large cemetery sites; one of the most notable is Loma Sandia. Loma Sandia had over 200 burials and a large number of grave goods and over 400 archaeological features (Hester 1995:440; Hester 1980a:82). The Falcon Reservoir area may have also had large cemeteries but this area has been highly disturbed and not all findings have been published (Hester 1995:440, 443).

Late Archaic

The Late Archaic is the better known part of the Archaic period. It ranges from 400 BC- AD 600 or 800 (Hester 2005:259, Hester 1995:441). Late Archaic sites are usually found along present day stream channels, unlike Middle Archaic sites which are found along present day and former stream channels (Hester 1995:442). Dart points from this period, in the northern parts of South Texas, include Shumla, Ensor, Frio, Marcos, Montell, Fairland, and Ellis. South Texas Late Archaic points are unique as they were made of heat-treated local cherts (Hester 1995:441). Going south the amount of stemmed points drops significantly. In the Laredo area and below the Late Archaic is characterized by small convex-based points: Matamoros, Catán, and Desmuke. Other tools include Olmos bifaces, Nueces scrapers, and Corner Tang bifaces (Terneny 2005:98; Hester 2005:260). Olmos bifaces continued be used into the Late Prehistoric (Hester 1995:441). Late Archaic sites and isolated burials have also yielded large, thin bifaces from Central Texas. This is an indicator that trade systems were in place by the Late Archaic and likely began at least in the Middle Archaic (Hester 2005:267).

Faunal remains are rare in this time period but organic material from hearths and ground stone tools, and wood-charcoal have been analyzed and compared with modern plant and animal resources. These comparative analyses have shown that many of the

same plant and animal resources available today were utilized during the Late Archaic as well. Mussel shells and *Rabdotus* snail shells are faunal remains that have been well preserved. Some Late Archaic sites have yielded *Rabdotus* middens indicating that these snails were purposefully collected as a food source (Hester 2005:266-267).

Figure 4.4. *Rabdotus*. Source: *http://www.schnr-specimen-shell.com*

Grinding implements are a common find in Late Archaic sites so this may reflect an increase in utilization of plant resources (Hester 1995:441).

Large cemetery sites continued to be used along the coastal regions but inland burials are typically isolated (Hester 1995:442). Large cemeteries may still have been in use inland during the Late Archaic, but there is no current evidence to suggest so. Burials were in a variety of positions, mostly flexed and extended although a few cremations have been noted. Analyses of Late Archaic burials show that the Late Archaic peoples were generally in good health (Perttula 2001:22, 31).

The Coastal Archaic

In the 1930s and 1940s, several major archaeological sites near Corpus Christi were investigated. Reports on these sites were not published but summaries of the reports were published in the 1950s by T.N. Campbell of the University of Texas. Campbell assigned prepottery materials to an "Aransas Focus" (Ricklis 1996:26).

Another coastal group of South Texas, in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, was the Brownsville Complex. Brownsville Complex sites date from the end of the Late Archaic through the Late Prehistoric and will be discussed in more detail below.

While most South Texas Archaic sites are located along stream channels, the coastal areas, Aransas Focus sites and Brownsville Focus sites, tend to be located on lomas or clay dunes, including habitation and burial sites (Terneny 2005:97).
The South Texas Archaic is defined by a shift to hunting small game and a higher exploitation of plant resources. The Archaic along the coast was defined by both these plus the addition of the use of marine resources (Terneny 2005:95).

The Late Prehistoric

The Late Prehistoric ranges from about AD 800 to AD 1600, 1200-400 YBP (Terneny 2005:93). The South Texas Indians were still hunters and gatherers at this time but now the introduction of the bow and arrow changed how they hunted (Hester 1980a:154). This new hunting implement required smaller flint points. The most common arrow points found in South Texas are: Peridz, Scallorn, Fresno, and Zavala points (Hester 1980a:154). Small flint points were not the only Late Prehistoric marker. This era also saw the use of end scrapers, drills, and awls as well as plain, cream-colored, bone tempered pottery similar to the Leon Plain pottery found in Central Texas (Hester 1980a:157). Some Late Prehistoric sites have yielded loaf-shaped limestone cobbles. These long cobbles have a transverse groove and are similar to arrow shaft straighteners found in Late Prehistoric California Indian sites and the American Southwest, and may have had the same function (Hester and Hill 1975:14). The presence of pottery disproves Suhm et al.'s (1954) belief that there was no "Neo-American" phase

in South Texas and Northeastern Mexico. South Texas ceramics were bone tempered and "formed by the coiling technique and fired in an oxidizing temperature. Exterior surface colors are predominately red, yellow, pink and gray. Decoration of exterior surfaces has been noted but is very rare" (Hester and Hill 1975:14). The exterior surface was typically smoothed out but coil junctures can often be seen on the poorly finished interior surfaces (Hester and Hill 1975:14). Although the South Texas plain, bone-tempered, ceramics are closely related to the Central Texas Leon Plain ceramic tradition, a few sand-tempered sherds, similar to those of the Central and South Central Texas coast have also been found in interior Southern Texas sites (Hester and Hill 1975:14,16).

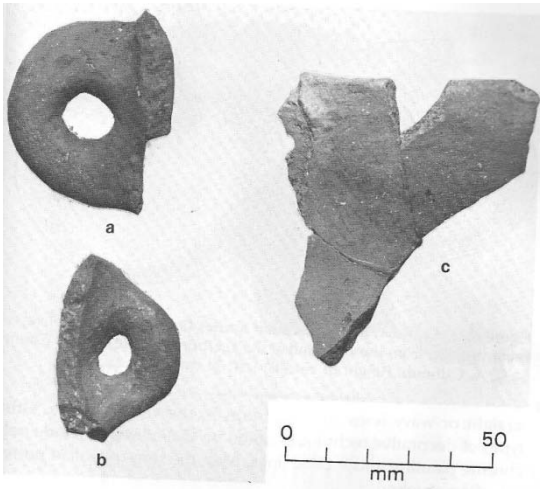

Figure 4.5. Bone tempered pottery from South Texas.
(Source Hester 1980a:125).

According to Hester (1995:443), the cultural patterns of the South Texas Late Prehistoric era have some aspects in common with those of Central Texas, such as Perdiz points, end scrapers, bone-tempered pottery, stone pipes, and shell or bird bone ornaments. It may have been the Central Texans that introduced pottery and the bow and arrow to South Texas. The Central Texan culture most similar to the South Texan cultures in the Late Prehistoric is known as the Toyah (1995:443). Toyah sites in Central

Texas also tend to be located along stream channels. Stephen Black (1986 cited in Hester 1995:445-446) believes that the presence of Toyah-like cultural patterns in South Texas represents either cultural diffusion or southward movement of Toyah groups. Hester (1975:121-122) does not believe that the Toyah peoples of Central Texas moved south and were easily accepted and integrated into the South Texas cultures, especially since the bison the Toyah peoples primarily hunted did not usually travel too far into South Texas; cultural diffusion seems the most likely explanation. The Toyah are part of the Central Texas area and so in Central Texas Toyah markers belong to the Toyah Phase or Focus. Toyah traits in South Texas are known as the Toyah Horizon because the traits are unevenly diffused throughout South Texas and were unlikely native to the area (Hester 1995:446).

Late Prehistoric sites are often found along or near present stream channels in riparian microenvironments and are 3600 meters square on average (Hester and Hill 1975:7; Hester 1980b:130). Late Prehistoric sites and Archaic sites do not overlap often, but there have been a few Late Prehistoric sites over Archaic. The lack of overlap may reflect a shift of drainage patterns (Hester 1975:114). Commonly found in these sites are pits filled with bone or ash and baked clay, tool-making workshop areas, mussel and snail shell middens and hearths (Hester 1980a:157). Most Late Prehistoric sites are occupation sites and are oval or linear in shape (Hall et al. 1982:26). Grinding implements are rare but not unknown so perhaps the use of plant resources decreased and the use of faunal resources increased, however historical accounts indicate the importance of seasonal harvest (Hester 1975:116). Most grinding implements may have been made out of wood and so did not preserve. Faunal remains from this time period indicate that most meat

resources where utilized such as bison, pronghorn, and whitetail deer, but small mammals such as rodents and rabbits, were also a major meat resource. Birds, although minor, were also part of the Late Prehistoric diet; the wild turkey was probably the most important of avian food resources (Hester 1980a: 158-159; Hester and Hill 1975:17). Like Archaic sites, large snail shell middens are found in Late Prehistoric sites showing they were still being gathered as a food resource. Unlike other the cultural patterns in other North American regions, Late Prehistoric South Texas Indians did not develop agriculture (Terneny 2005:99). Hester (1975:121) separates the Late Prehistoric cultures into two groups based on environmental adaptation patterns. One group is the savannah adaptation, these are inland groups that lived along streams and subsisted on inland plant foods and animals. The interior groups disposed of their dead away from campsites in either extended, flexed or cremation inhumations. These Late Prehistoric inland groups were the likely ancestors of the historic Coahuiltecan groups. The second group is the maritime adaptation. These groups were located along the coast and their subsistence depended primarily on marine resources. They usually camped on and buried their dead in clay dunes (Hester 1975:121; Hester and Hill 1975:1,23).

Coastal Late Prehistoric/ The Maritime Adaptation

Extensive studies along the South Texas coast "has led to the recognition of two archaeological complexes dating from Late Prehistoric times" (Hester 1980a:160). Along the South-central Coast was the Rockport Complex. Artifacts associated with Rockport Complex sites are: stemmed arrow points, mostly Perdiz points, sandy-paste Rockport ware ceramics, unifacial end scrapers, bifacially flaked chert perforators and knives, and sandstone metates (Hester 1980a:160; Ricklis 1996:27). Shell tools such as:

shell adzes, scrapers, knives, awls, hammers, net weights, and ornaments are also found in Rockport Complex sites (Ricklis 1996:27).

The Rockport Complex is believed to be descended from the Aransas Focus of the Archaic era and to directly precede the Karankawa (Newcomb 1972:61; Ricklis 1996:26). Aransas Focus traits do not include ceramics, but a sand-tempered ceramic series, Rockport ware, is a definite marker of the Rockport Complex. There are three types of Rockport ware: Rockport Plain, Rockport Black-on-Gray, and Rockport Incised. All Rockport ware types were manufactured by coiling, but visible interior and exterior coils were rubbed off with ribbed bivalve shells. Rockport Plain vessels are defined by the absence of decoration. Rockport Incised vessels are defined by incised line motifs confined to the sublip of the vessels' exteriors. Rockport Black-on-Gray vessels are defined by painted decorations or coating of asphaltum, which would wash up on the beaches from Gulf floor seepages (Ricklis 1996:29).

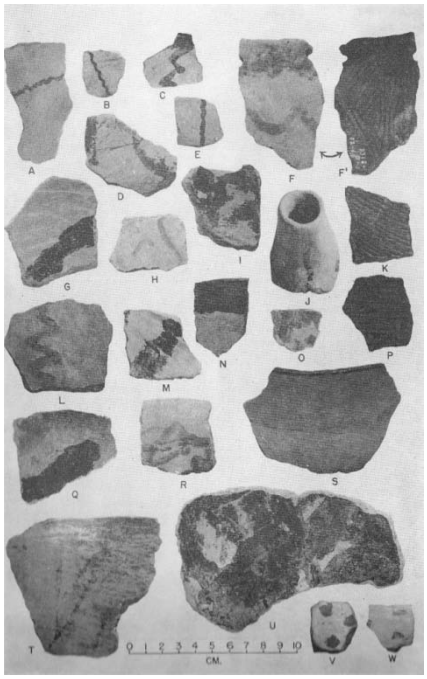

Figure 4.6. Samples of Rockport Black-on-Gray.
(*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:383)

According to Ricklis (1996:35), there are two groups in which Rockport Complex (sometimes called Rockport Phase) sites can be categorized into. Group 1 sites are restricted to the shoreline area while Group 2 sites are found "on upland margins of the inland prairies overlooking stream floodplains" (Ricklis 1996:35). Group 1 sites tend to be larger and contain thick middens with a large amount of fish and shellfish remains. Group 2 sites tend to have little in the way of cultural debris and middens and deposits tend to be thin. Faunal remains are mainly of whitetail deer and bison. Although Group 1 sites are larger, Group 2 sites are more common. If records of the historic Karankawa are any indication, these Group 1 and Group 2 patterns were likely due to seasonal occupations. During the fall and winter, when black drum and redfish accumulate in coastal bay areas to spawn, the Rockport peoples would have congregated along the coast. The large concentration of fish would have supported a fairly large population. In the spring the fish populations would disperse and would no longer support large populations. If the Rockport Complex peoples broke up into smaller groups and spread out it would have made subsistence easier. Plant growth would have been at its peak during the spring and summer, and bison and deer would have also been in season. These two conditions would have made inland occupation more ideal during the spring and summer. As a result, Group 1 sites represent coastal fall and winter gathering of large groups, most of which would separate, disperse and move inland during the spring and summer, forming Group 2 sites. This kind of seasonal movement was also recorded by Cabeza de Vaca in his account of his life with the Karankawa and current archaeological data suggests that this seasonal movement pattern went as far back as the late Archaic with the Aransas Focus (Ricklis 1996:35, 102-103, 107-108).

Along the coast of the Lower Rio Grande Delta was the Brownsville Complex, which started towards the end of the Late Archaic. Brownsville Complex artifacts show a "sophisticated" shell-working industry (Hester 1980a:160). Points associated with the Brownsville Complex where Starr and Cameron points (Hester 1980a:160). Little is known about the Brownsville Complex subsistence and settlement patterns, but they used clay dunes for campsites and cemeteries, and were hunters, gatherers and fishers (Hester 1995:447; Hester 1975:111). The Brownsville Complex related artifacts are perforated canine teeth, *Oliva sayana* shell beads and tinklers, *Marginella apicina* shell beads, Busycon conch shell pendants, conch columella beads, and human bone artifacts. Brownsville Complex burials are often found with ochre pigment which had been rubbed on bones prior to burial (Terneny 2005:205; Perttula 2001:17).

Some Brownsville Complex traits have been found in the inland of the Lower Rio Grande Delta. Brownsville Complex artifacts have been found in Falcon Reservoir sites; these artifacts include Oliva sayana beads, shell pendants, and bone beads. It is unlikely the Brownsville Complex spread so far inland. The associated of Brownsville Complex artifacts with inland sites suggests that the coastal and inland peoples had regular interaction with each other during the Late Prehistoric (Terneny 2005:201).

The Brownsville Complex peoples made more shell ornaments than they could have used. McNeish's (1947 cited in Hester 1995:449) study established that the Brownsville Complex peoples had a trade system with the Late Postclassic Huastecan culture as shell ornaments have been found in Huastecan sites of that era and Huastecan artifacts, such as Huastec pottery, obsidian, spindle whorls and jadeite artifacts, have been found at Brownsville Complex sites (Fagan 2005:313). Hester (1995:449) points

out that the Aztecs favored marine shells and marine shell ornaments that may have been supplied through Huastec tribute. This leads to the possibility that the Huastec obtained shell ornaments from the Brownsville Complex and then gave the shell and ornaments to the Aztec for tribute.

Summary of Early Historic

As far as South Texas is concerned, the early historic period can be said to start with Cabeza de Vaca's adventures through the South Central Texas coast and South Texas as he and his ship-wreck mates attempted to find their way to Spanish Colonial Mexico. Hester (1995:450) considers this period between the prehistoric and the historic to be the proto-historic and begins after Cabeza de Vaca's shipwreck as, their presence had little impact on the Indians. As Spanish rule spread into Northeastern Mexico and South Texas, the fall of the South Texas Indians would occur rapidly for a variety of reasons (Hester 1980a:160).

The Spanish set up missions throughout parts of Northern Mexico and Southern Texas as part as an attempt to Christianize and "civilize" the Indians. Most Indian groups were not hostile towards the Spanish and entered the missions out of curiosity. This was not as true in the Lower Rio Grande Valley where Indians often attempted to resist and fight the Spanish (Hester 1980a:160). In Spanish missions, the Indians were put to work building missions' structures; they were taught agriculture and also put to work farming and ranching. They often attempted to run away but were sometimes captured by Spanish troops. Other times the Indians would return on their own when they could not find enough food to survive. The Indians of South Texas were caught between two movements: the southward movement of the Comanche and Apaches as they got pushed

out of their native lands and the northern expansion of the Spanish frontier. The Lipan Apaches were often hostile to the South Texas Indians and so sometimes the Indians would move into or return to Spanish missions for protection from the Lipan Apache (Hester 1980a:161). However, the South Texas Indians were not completely safe from the Apache and Comanche attacks in the missions. Attacks from the Apache and Comanche and from introduced diseases would rapidly reduce the native population. Most South Texas groups would be gone or absorbed into the Mexican population by 1800. Northeastern Mexican groups would last a bit longer but also became practically invisible by the late 1800s (Newcomb 1972:37).

Historic inland groups and Southern Coastal groups are known as Coahuiltecans and Central and South Central coastal groups as the Karankawa. Both the Karankawa and the Coahuiltecans are considered to be members of the "Western Gulf" culture and are tied together by a common linguistic stock, Coahuiltecan. This language is related to the Hokan linguistic stalk of southern California and indicates that the two groups may have been tied many thousands of years ago (Newcomb 1972:29-32).

Historic Era South Texas sites usually have evidence of Spanish influence such as metal or glass arrowheads, glass beads and Spanish ceramics. However, there are a few sites in Zavala County that have been radio-carbon dated to the mid 1700s that have had no evidence of Spanish influence. These sites may represent groups that went on with limited or no contact with the Spanish or groups that left the missions and completely rejected the Spanish way of life (Hester 1980a:161,164).

Conclusion

The chronology for South Texas must be considered to be general. The fact that there was no single South Texas culture means that individual groups changed at different rates (Hester 1980b:119). Change was very slow. The South Texas groups never developed agriculture and the hunting and gathering lifestyle persisted until the tragic demise of these groups. Archaic style dart points have even been found on the floors of Spanish-style dwellings and missions (Suhm et al. 1954:138). Newcomb (1993:32) believes that one reason for this slow change was due to environmental limits. He believes that the people would have been very busy just supplying their minimal needs and would not have had time to attempt a new lifestyle. Cultural diffusion from the north would have been minimal because, "Outsiders are not attracted to such regions and its inhabitants are not likely to have surplus products to trade….south Texas has the appearance of a relic region, an isolated backwash in which cultures remained virtually unchanged for a long period" (Newcomb 1972:32).

Although it is easy to see Newcomb's point, archaeological evidence in certain regions seems to prove otherwise. Perttula (2001:31) states that studies of the burials at the Morhiss site show that the populations were in relatively good health and that Central Texans may have visited South Texas. Studies of faunal remains at multiple archaeological sites have yielded a variety of species showing that the South Texas Indians made use of many or any available food resource. However, not all areas had large cemeteries or signs of good health. Cabeza de Vaca (1983:92-93) recounts his stay with two groups of South Texas Indians stating that they (the Indians) suffered from great

hunger. The probability is that the health of the South Texas Indians varied from group to group and even from one season to another.

CHAPTER V

HISTORIC RECORDS

The historic era for this region starts with early exploration and travel by the Spanish explorers who wrote information about their journeys through this area leaving some information about the natives they encountered. The most significant of these accounts was that of Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca because he mentioned many cultural practices of the natives with whom he lived. Cabeza de Vaca's accounts are also less biased than those left by other Spaniards who did not live amongst the natives. Most historical records of the Rio Grande Delta and Texas Coastal Indians fall within an ecological time period called the Little Ice Age, which lasted between AD 1350 and 1850. Written accounts from this time period show that it was much colder and wetter than current conditions which allowed for creatures such as bison to make their way toward the coastal plain and even south of the Rio Grande (Foster 2008:108).

Historic Period

Martín Salinas (1990:4-11) divides the historical documents pertaining to this area into four periods:

- Period I: "Early Exploration and Travel, 1519-1600." There are few documents from this time but this is the time period of Cabeza de Vaca's stay in the region (1519-1535). Cabeza de Vaca's accounts do not include many names of the Indians he encountered. While he lived amongst them he lacked writing

materials and when he would write his account a few years later it was unlikely that he could recall the names of the numerous groups he encountered.

- Period II: "Spanish Settlement of Nuevo León and Displacement of Indian Groups from the Monterry-Cadereyta-Cerralvo Area, 1600-1747." The most important documents of this period were those of Alonso de León (Senior) who, in 1648, began to write an account containing information about the Indians and their cultures in the area. His work would be continued by Juan Bautista Chapa.
- Period III: "Colonization of Tamaulipas, 1747-1757." Tamaulipas was colonized by José de Escandón who left documents connected with the colonization program and with information about the Indian groups nearby.
- Period IV: "Decline of Indian Populations and Loss of Ethnic Identities, 1757-1886." There are many documents from this period "but few of them contain substantial amounts of information on the surviving Indian populations" (Salinas 1990: 5).

In 1519 the governor of Jamaica, Franciso Garay, sent out a small fleet of ships to explore and colonize the Gulf coast. A four ship fleet exploring the Gulf of Mexico commanded by Alonso Alvarez de Pineda stopped at the mouth of a river they called "Río de las Palmas" believed to be what is known today as the Rio Grande River. The exploring party encountered some native groups who were friendly towards them and initiated trade. After hearing this good news from Pineda, Garay sent out another fleet of three ships with 150 men, commanded by Diego de Carmango, with the supplies needed to build a fort. In 1520 the fleet landed in the same area as Pineda had previously. The Indians tolerated the presence of these men for only several days; then they gathered a

large group to threaten Camargo. Camargo decided to attack but the Indians broke up his army killing all their horses and at least eighteen soldiers. Camargo and his men were forced to retreat, some fled by ship but the healthiest were left to flee on land; they headed towards Veracruz.

Garay sent out another fleet of ships after hearing no news from Camargo. This fleet found no trace of Camargo but also ended up fleeing to Veracruz after fights with the natives. Finally, Garay personally took a fleet of 16 ships with over 600 men, 150 horses and artillery. When he reached the mouth of the Río de las Palmas he sent Gonzalo de Ocampo to explore the river. Ocampo returned three days later claiming that the land was uninhabited. Garay then landed 400 men and all the horses. The remaining men were to go by vessel to Pánuco by traveling along the coast. Garay's army would follow on land. Garay found the land to be inhospitable and too marshy to colonize. His army did encounter a few Indian groups which Garay did not name. These Indians were friendly at first but became hostile for reasons that were not recorded (Salinas 1990:22-24).

By 1577 the first efforts to colonize Nuevo León started. Usually these occupations were only temporary. Among the first colonists were Spaniards interested in profiting from slave trade, resulting in many attacks on Indian encampments of Nuevo León. The Indian captives were sold to work in mines farther south in New Spain. In 1587 an Indian revolt drove away many Spaniards from New Spain but some Spaniards returned by 1596 to the Monterrey area. This occupation would be permanent (Salinas 1990:15).

The most significant occurrence to the natives of northeastern Mexico occurred in the early 1600s with the introduction of the *encomienda* system in Nuevo León. The system allowed some landowners to "own" an Indian group; this title was bestowed to them by the governor of Nuevo León. After this deal had been sanctioned, the landowner, the *encomendero,* would go, with an armed force, to the Indian encampment and capture Indians, put them in chains and take them to work on the *encomendero's* land. The Indians were supervised by a superintendent and armed men. At the end of the work day the Indians were released. This essentially gave the *encomendero* slaves that did not have to be fed although some Indian women and children were kept to be servants or hostages. Each time an *encomendero* needed work to be done he would send armed men to recapture the Indians. This system had been prohibited by Spain in the mid 1500s but laws were not easy to enforce in New Spain, and the system would not be abolished until 1698 and not strongly enforced until 1715 (Salinas 1990:15-16). The other part of northeastern Mexico important to this study, Tamaulipas, did not have any Spanish settlements until 1746 when José de Escandón started a massive settlement program in the area (Salinas 1990:18).

Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: (Period I)

Cabeza de Vaca's contact with the natives had limited impact on them; nevertheless, his contributions to our modern understanding of the Indians in this region are significant (Hester 1980a:160). In the spring of 1528, a Spanish expedition was sent out to survey the area from the Florida peninsula to the Río de las Palmas, now known as the Rio Grande. The expedition was led by Pánfilo de Narváez with his second in command and treasurer Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Cava. A party of three hundred men

went ashore near Tampa Bay and went northward but soon after encountered resistance and had lost many men due to illness or Indian attacks. The survivors made five barges and tried to sail to Panuco (modern Veracruz), an outpost in New Spain. Weather would toss the barges to various points along the Gulf Coast. Two of the barges, commanded by Cabeza de Vaca and Andres Dorantes, landed at Galveston Island, which the Spaniards named Malhado Island, "Doom Island" (Hickerson 1998:200).

While on the island the Spaniards were visited several times by a group of Indians who brought the men food and housed them. A few days later the Indians brought another group of "Christians." These men were Captains Alonso del Castillo and Andrés Dorantes along with their entire crew. Their barge had capsized a day before Cabeza de Vaca's. The men decided to try to repair the barge so that the strong could attempt to continue to sail to Panuco to get help while the remaining men, most of whom were ill, would remain until they recovered (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:59). The attempt failed and the barge sank. The four strongest men at Malhado attempted to continue to Panuco on foot but they, and other men at Malhado, died of injuries, exposure, or disease that winter. (Hickerson 1998:200). The harsh winter weather made it difficult for even the Indians to obtain food.

Cabeza de Vaca wrote this account of that winter:

> "Five Christians quartered on the coast came to the extremity of eating each other. Only the body of the last one, whom nobody was left to eat, was found unconsumed. Their names were Sierra, Diego Lopez, Corral, Palacious and Gonzalo Ruiz.
>
> The Indians were so shocked at this cannibalism that, if they had seen it sometime earlier, they surely would have killed every one of us. In a very short while as it was, only fifteen of the eighty who had come survived.
>
> Then half the natives died from a disease of the bowels [dysentery] and [the rest] blamed us.

> When they came to kill us, the Indian who kept me interceded. He said: If we had so much power of sorcery we would not have let all but a few of our own perish; the few left did no hurt or wrong; it would be best to leave us alone. God our Lord be praised, they listened and relented" (Translation by Covey 1983:60).

The men left Malhado and headed south eventually joining and traveling with various bands of the area. Cabeza de Vaca, due to illness, stayed with a band, the Capoques, which migrated between Malhado and the mainland (Hickerson 1998:200). The Capoques' territory is slightly further north of this area of study, however, they belong to the cultural group known as the Karankawa. The Karankawa's territory does extend south into the Tamaulipan Biotic Province and is therefore still relevant to the Rio Grande Delta's history. The Capoques may have actually been the group known as the Coaques or Cocos in the northern most Karankawa territory (Hickerson 1998:202).

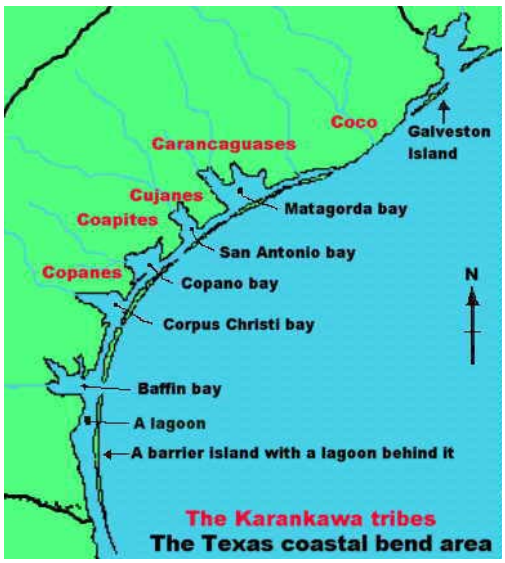

Figure 5.1. Location of Karankawa tribes. *Source: www.texasindians.com*

The Malhado Way of Life (Capoques)

Cabeza de Vaca describes the Capoques as "tall and well built." Some men had pierced nipples and a cane plug inserted through the lower lip and all were excellent

archers. The men wore no clothes but the women "cover some part of their persons with a wool that grows on trees [Spanish Moss] and the damsels [unmarried virgins] dress in deerskin" (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:63). From October through the end of February, the Capoques lived inland and subsisted mainly on roots. In November and December the women dove into the water to obtain these roots; these were also the months that the Capoques did most of their fishing. At the end of February they left their location in search of other foods. During April they harvested and subsisted mainly off blackberries. For three months of the year they subsisted mainly off oysters. Sometimes the natives went several days without food (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:61, 63).

Cabeza de Vaca was astonished at how much the Capoques loved their children. "They loved their offspring more than any in the world and treat them very mildly" (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:61). His accounts indicated that, after the death of a child, the whole village weeped. The parents mourned three times a day for a year afterwards, and then the funeral rites would occur. All who died were treated this way except for the elderly "who merit no regret." For the first three months of the year of mourning the family would not go out for food and were provided by neighbors and extended family. The Capoques buried their dead, except medicine men who were cremated. After the cremation, the powdered bones of a medicine man were kept for a year; afterwards when his funeral rites were celebrated, the powdered bones were mixed in water and the relatives would all take a drink (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:61-62).

Marriage was typically monogamous except for medicine men who were allowed two or three wives. When a daughter was married, her new husband had to bring all his kills (food) to the house of her father and was not allowed to eat any of it. He did not go

hungry as it was also customary for "the female carrier from his father-in-law's house" to provide for him. The bride's father (and the rest of the bride's family) was not allowed to enter the house of his son-in-law and vice versa. The bride, however, was free to visit the family of her husband as she pleased (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:62).

The Capoques spoke two languages which Cabeza de Vaca called Capoque and Han. The Han Indians were allied with the Capoques and the two would sometimes meet up during times of harvest (blackberries and oysters). Amongst the Han Indians were the other survivors of the barge wreck including Alonso del Castillo, Andrés Dorantes and Dorantes' slave, Estevanico. Due to the "differentness" of the Spaniards the natives were compelled to make the captains (Cabeza de Vaca, Castillo and Dorantes) medicine-men.

> "The Islanders wanted to make physicians of us without examination or review of diplomas. Their method of cure is to blow on the sick, the breath and the laying-on of hands supposedly casting out the infirmity. They insisted we should do this too and be of some use to them. We scoffed at their cures and at the idea we knew how to heal. But they withheld food from us until we complied….Hunger forced us to obey, but disclaiming any responsibility for our failure or success" (Cabeza de Vaca, trans. by Covey 1983:64).

Other methods of healing mentioned included making incisions on a spot of pain, sucking on the wound and cauterizing it. Stones and local plants were also used in medicine although Cabeza de Vaca does not name any of these plants. The Spanish captains added to these methods, Christian prayers and blessings. In return the Spanish received food, skins and other gifts (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:64-65).

Life as a Wandering Merchant

This kind treatment would not last long. Cabeza de Vaca became very ill. He was visited by the Spaniards living with near-by tribes and these comrades tried to convince the Capoques to let Cabeza de Vaca travel south with them but Cabeza de Vaca was too

ill for travel (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:66). Cabeza de Vaca's illness moved his rank in the tribe very low and he had to perform women's work which included digging up roots to eat, fetching water, and gathering and carrying fire wood. This experience leads Cabeza de Vaca to mention that women's work is the harder lot. The harsh treatment convinces Cabeza de Vaca that he has to find a way to flee to another tribe, the Charruco (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:66; Wade 1999:336).

Cabeza de Vaca fled to the Charruco in February of 1530, but he leaves no account as to how he escaped. For the Charruco he acted as a wandering trade merchant. Cabeza de Vaca was considered to be neutral amongst the natives and this allowed him to travel very far into the interior land. He traded cones, seashells, conches for cutting, beads, and highly valued mesquite beans inland and he would return with such items as skins, red ochre, hard canes for arrow shafts, flint for arrowheads, sinew, and tassels of deer hair. "This occupation suited me; I could travel where I wished, was not obliged to work, and was not a slave. Wherever I went, the Indians treated me honorably and gave me food because they liked my commodities" (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:66-67).

The Great Escape and Life Among the Avavares and Arbadaos

Cabeza de Vaca accounts that he did this kind of work for six years but most calculations by interpreters of his texts estimate two to three years (Covey 1983:67; Hickerson 1998:213). During his years as a traveling merchant, Cabeza de Vaca began to devise a plan to get to New Spain. His first step was to gather up other Christians. He first tried to convince Lope de Oviedo, one of the surviving crew members, to travel with him since his (Oviedo's) companions had died or moved to other groups. It took several trips before Cabeza de Vaca could convince Oviedo (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:67-68).

Cabeza de Vaca and Oviedo traveled to the Bay of Espiritu Santo near which they encountered a tribe, the Quevenes. Oviedo was so intimidated by this tribe that he abandoned Cabeza de Vaca's plan and headed back to Malhado (Hickerson 1998:213-214).

Cabeza de Vaca learned from these Indians that another tribe, with three refugees, would soon pass nearby. This tribe was the Mareames, with whom Andres Dorantes travelled. He waited beside the path and within a day he was reunited with Andres Dorantes. They continued to travel with the Mareames. Castillo and Estevanico were nearby travelling with the Yguazes. They waited six months for the annual prickly pear harvest when the groups would gather. They anticipated the arrival of the Avavares, with whom they hoped to depart (taking them closer to New Spain); however a dispute between the Yguazes and the Mareames would separate the two groups before the arrival of the Avavares. Cabeza de Vaca's plan would have to be delayed another year. In the following summer of 1534 the four men met up again and went in search of the Avavares. The Avavares were able to understand the language of the Mareames, which Cabeza de Vaca had learned. Amongst the Avavares were people willing to help them on their way to New Spain. However, the Avavares knew of the Spaniard's reputations as healers and urged the men to be healers for them as they traveled (Hickerson 1998:214-215).

The Avavares were part of the Coahuiltecan, a collective of various small groups (including those that will be mentioned), that occupied the vast majority of the Rio Grande Delta.

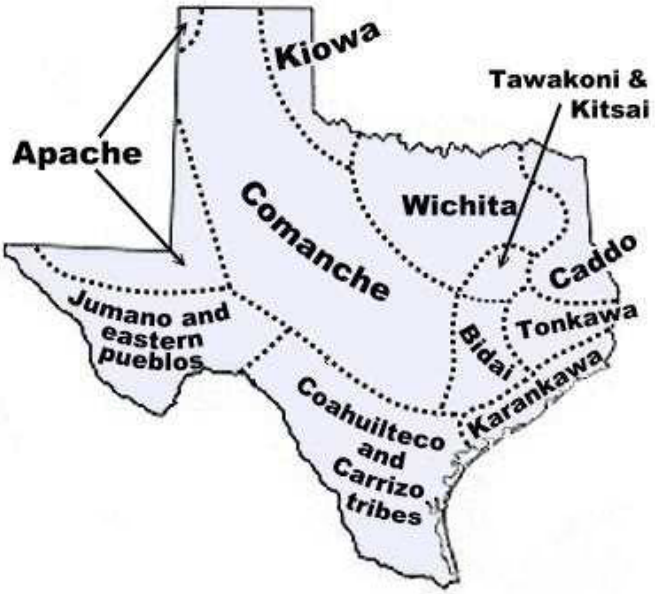

Figure 5.2. Historical tribes of Texas. *Source*: www.native-languages.org/texas3.jpg

Cabeza de Vaca (1983:91) states that the Avavares treated him and his companions well. The culture was similar to those from which they had been with previously but the Avavares often suffered great hunger. The Spaniards stayed with the Avavares for six to eight months (according to Cabeza de Vaca's calculations). When the prickly-pears began to ripen Cabeza de Vaca and Estevanico traveled for a day until they found a tribe called the Maliacones. After three days Cabeza de Vaca sent Estevanico to fetch Castillo and Dorantes.

> "When they got there, the four of us set out with the Maliacones, who were going to find the small fruit of certain trees which they subsist on for ten or twelve days while the prickly pears are maturing. They joined another tribe, the Arabadaos, who astonished us by their weak, emaciated, swollen condition. We told the Maliacones with whom we had come that we wanted to stop with these Arbadaos" (Cabeza de Vaca, trans. by Covey 1983:91).

Living with the Arbadaos the men had suffered starvation much worse than they had experienced with any previous group. They subsisted off two handfuls of under-ripe

prickly pears a day. The men traded some items for two dogs which they ate. They traveled naked like the Arbadaos but they suffered frequent sun burn and blisters. The thorny environment also tore at their flesh when they attempted to gather wood causing much bleeding. Cabeza de Vaca would make bows, arrows, and mats for the Arbadaos who, although they knew how to make these items, had to devote all their time to finding food; otherwise they would starve (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:92).

Although these were harsh conditions to endure the Arbadaos were not cruel to the Spaniards. The Arbadaos were even willing to help the Spaniards on their journey. When the Spaniards' guides led them across a large river they entered a large village of a hundred houses-probably the largest settlement they had seen in Texas up to that time. After a circuitous detour through a mountainous region, the four Spaniards would reach the Rio Grande at or near La Junta de los Rios. From there, their progress through the western deserts would be unimpeded, culminating in their arrival at the Rio Culicán eight months later, in April 1536 (Hickerson 1998:215-216).

Figure 5.3. An interpretation of Cabeza de Vaca's route to Mexico
(Source: http://www.pbs.org/conquistadors/devaca/devaca_a00.html)

La Salle, Henri Joutel, and the Talons : (Period II)

More than a hundred and fifty years after Cabeza de Vaca's adventure, another group of people would crash land near Matagorda Bay, another Karankawan territory. This time it was the French who would have an encounter with the South Texas coastal Indians. Famous French explorer René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle (or simply Robert de LaSalle), known for his exploration of the Mississippi River would have his last expedition in this South Texas region. In 1684 La Salle started a large expedition to America to establish French colonies at the mouth of the Mississippi River. He took four ships with about three hundred people. This expedition was doomed from the start. One ship was lost to an attack by pirates, and one third of the people died of disease. La Salle's fleet overshot the Mississippi and the supply ship, L'Aimable, crashed at the entrance of Matagorda Bay. Some crew and colonists decided to turn back and return to France on a third ship. The remaining crew and colonists numbered around one hundred and eighty. These people established Fort Saint Louis near modern day Victoria County while La Salle continued to explore westward, perhaps even as far as the Rio Grande. A winter storm in 1686 sank the settlers' last ship, *La Belle.* La Salle was finally convinced that he had landed too far west and led a small party eastward to try to find the Mississippi. He was assassinated by one of his own men during this journey. The remaining party found the Mississippi and followed it upwards to New France (Canada). Only six men would return to France, one of them was Henri Joutel. Joutel was La Salle's neighbor in France and was La Salle's lieutenant and companion on the expedition to South Texas. La Salle put Joutel in command of Fort Saint Louis for two years before taking Joutel with him on the last journey to search for the Mississippi.

Joutel, as a self appointed historian, kept a highly detailed journal which is the most complete account (but not the only) of this ill-fated expedition. Joutel's journal contains some information about the Indians whom the French encountered and with whom they would later fight. These Indians were very likely from the same culture, the Karankawa, that Cabeza de Vaca had encountered over a century prior to La Salle's expedition (Foster 1998:4, 18, 23).

One of the first encounters La Salle's crew made with the Indians of coastal Texas was in 1685 when La Salle sent several small shallops inland in search of fresh drinkable water for the his ship. Joutel was one of the men on these shallops. He reported seeing a group of twenty or thirty Indians along the beach. The Indians had signaled for the men to approach them but the men were too afraid to leave the shallops as they could be easily lost or destroyed by the sea. Joutel then signaled the Indians to come to them. Nine of the Indians left the group and went to the shallops. These Indians were taken aboard the ship where La Salle attempted to get information from them. La Salle knew and spoke several native languages but none of the languages he knew were understood by the Indians. La Salle also had onboard a Shawnee hunter named Nika, but Nika did not understand the Indians either. The Indians signed and made gestures indicating that they did not understand. They also made signs and gestures that there were many animals on land. La Salle gave the Indians a few knives and small glass beads and sent them on their way back. Joutel mentions in this account that the clothes that were lent to the Indians before coming aboard were taken back before the Indians left the ship (Joutel 1998:72-73). This likely indicates that the Indians went naked, or at least more naked than the French men thought was morally decent.

A few days later La Salle had sent about eight men to work on a tree in an attempt to make a canoe. A few hours later two of the men returned, out of breath and fearful as they believed they were being chased by a large party of Indians and that the other men had already been captured. La Salle ordered the men to arm themselves and go investigate. The Frenchmen saw the Indians who turned to flee upon seeing the fully armed men. La Salle ordered the men to lay down their weapons and signal the Indians to approach. After the Indians saw that the Frenchmen had put down their weapons they also put down their weapons and approached the Frenchmen, along with the Frenchmen who were thought to have been captured. Joutel wrote this account which describes an Indian greeting as well as body language:

> "United with us, the Indians made friendly gestures in their own way; that is, they rubbed their hands on their chests and then rubbed them over our chests and arms. They demonstrated friendship by putting their hands over their hearts which meant that they were glad to see us. We returned their greeting in as nearly like manner as we could. All was by signs, for we could not understand each other otherwise. They made a certain throat or guttural cry when we said something to them. They also made a sound with the tongue like a hen when she calls her chicks, or better said, as we make to a horse when we want it to move or do something else." (Joutel, translation by Warren, J.S., 1998).

The group of Frenchmen and several "important" Indians walked back to the French camp, leaving behind a few Frenchmen as "hostages." La Salle tried to get more information from these Indians, whom Joutel calls "chiefs," about the Mississippi or any tribes that may be around it. Once again the language barrier would leave La Salle with no information. All La Salle had learned from the Indian's signs and gestures was that there was good hunting inland, including bison. La Salle gave the Indians knives and hatchets as presents. The Frenchmen went back to the Indian camp to retrieve their men

who had been left as hostages. Joutel comments here about how the women were mostly naked except for a skin that covered them in the front from the waist to knees. The Frenchmen found these women to be very unattractive due to the "markings" on their faces (Joutel 1998:88-89). These may have been tattoos, as many South Texas Indians were also tattooed and the women known for having tattoos all over their bodies (Salinas 1990) or simply face paint. Another interesting fact that Joutel mentions in this encounter is that the Indians fed them (the French) dolphin meat (Joutel 1998:89). This is interesting as Cabeza de Vaca makes no mention of the Karankawan people eating dolphin. It may have not been customary amongst the group with whom Cabeza de Vaca lived or may have become part of the diet later, as a century had passed.

It was sometime after this encounter that one of La Salle's ships, the *Aimbale*, sank. La Salle sent a group of men to the Indian camp to barter for canoes and then when they reached the Indian camp they had discovered that the Indians had already salvaged many of the items from the ship wreck. This they reported back to La Salle. The next day, La Salle sent out another envoy to ask for the items, mostly blankets, to be returned. However, the men that La Salle sent out "had more passion than sense, [and] went straight to the Indians' camp, arms in hand as if they intended to use force, which made several of the Indians run away" (Joutel 1998:90). One of the Frenchmen entered an Indian hut and tried to explain that they wanted to recover the items from their shipwreck but they did not understand each other. The Indians decided it was best to retreat and left behind some blankets and animals skins which the Frenchmen took. The Frenchmen also took a few canoes which they found. The Frenchmen tried to use the canoes to go back to the French camp but had no oars so failed. They were forced to stop and rest before

they reached the French camp. When the Indians returned to their camp to find their animal skins and canoes missing they believed that war had been declared against them and decided to take revenge. They shot several of the resting Frenchmen with their arrows. One of the Frenchmen escaped to warn La Salle. The next day La Salle found two of his envoys dead and one seriously wounded. This attack is what caused many of the men and colonists to lose hope and take a third ship to return to France (Joutel 1998:90-94). This event is significant because it marked the beginning of La Salle's war with the Indians. It also gives a clue as to what the Karankawan Indians valued. It appears that the Indians had a habit of being accepting and friendly upon initial meetings but if some sort of act was committed that they considered a violation, they were quick to retaliate. According to Robert A. Ricklis (1996:147), "there are early accounts that when no such violations were committed, friendly relations between Indians and Europeans ensued."

After the ship left, La Salle decided to build a make-shift fort (Fort Saint Louis), using timber left from the ship wreck of the *Aimbale,* to have better protection against the Indians. He left Joutel in charge of the fort while he went to find information about the Mississippi. Ignorant of his location, La Salle went west. While La Salle was away, Joutel spent most of the time fortifying the fort. According to Joutel, Indians came around the fort fairly often to "prowl around us, imitating wolves and dogs" (Joutel 1998:98). One time a group of unarmed Indians approached the fort and Joutel decided to talk to them. The Indians tried to sign that they were hunting. The second in command wanted to kill these Indians but Joutel let them go, however, to force the Indians to leave the area faster he had cannons fired to frighten them away (Joutel

1998:100). This act probably reinforced the Indians' idea that these Frenchmen had declared war upon them.

After La Salle returned he decided to build a more permanent settlement elsewhere. This took several trips back and forth as La Salle decided to re-salvage the timber used to make Fort Saint Louis. While the French were away the Indians would go to the abandoned fort and take the nails from the planks of wood which they used as points on their arrows (Wolff 1969:3; Joutel 1998:106). Several attacks occurred between the Indians and Frenchmen. La Salle did not let his men run from battles because he felt that the Indians would not let his men live as the Indians could run faster and longer than the Frenchmen. During one of these attacks Joutel spotted a man who was more fair-skinned than the Indians. This may have been another European but Joutel makes no more mention of this fair-skinned man (Joutel 1998:106).

After the settlement was built, La Salle decided to search for the Mississippi again leaving Joutel in command. Some men who had traveled with Joutel came back to the settlement and told Joutel of another small encounter with the Indians where two female Indians were captured, a young girl and a woman. The woman was wounded and died although La Salle had attempted to dress her wounds, "but whether from caprice or for glory, she tore away the dressings and bandages that had been put on her wound; nor would she eat" (Joutel 1998:117).

La Salle would continue to have encounters with Indians but as he headed northeast his further encounters are not relevant to the area of study. He did eventually make it to the Mississippi and was headed toward New France (Canada) when one of his own men assassinated him. Sometime after the Karankawa got word of La Salle's

departure from their land they attacked the last few men and women at the settlement, killing all but five (Wolff 1969:3). The five who had been spared were tattooed. The tattooing of these people indicates an importance of tattooing in tribal membership (Schaedel 1949:131). Cabeza de Vaca does not mention being tattooed himself so it may have not been a practice of the tribe with whom he lived, or it may have come into practice sometime after Cabeza de Vaca's journey. One of those spared was a young boy, Jean Baptiste Talon, whom they adopted along with his brother Pierre (Foster 2008:91). Jean Baptiste Talon, after living with the Karankawa, had suggested a reason for La Salle's constant conflict with the Indians:

> "…La Salle would never have had the war with the Clamcoets [Karankawan group] if on arrival he had not high-handedly taken their canoes and refused them some little article that they asked him in return for them and for other services that they were ready to render to him. Nothing is easier than to win their friendship. But also, as they give voluntarily to what they have, they do not like to be refused. And, while they are never aggressors, neither do they ever forget the pride of honor in their vengeance" (Translation by Weddle 1987:251 in Ricklis 1996:146).

This small account by Talons suggests that anything perceived as on offense by the Karankawas, might initiate ongoing distrust "and ultimately animosities between Indians and Euro-Americans" (Ricklis 1996:147). The Talon brothers gave some other accounts about the Clamcoeh. They stated the Clamcoehs were well built and if a child was born deformed it was immediately killed and buried. Healthy children were tattooed, a sign that they were part of the tribe. The Clamcoeh, as well as other Karankawa groups, had enemies, the Caddo from East Texas. Jean Talon had given an account of the Clamcoeh warriors heading to the east to fight the Caddo. They returned six weeks later with

horses, Caddo scalps and slaves, several of whom became victims of ceremonial cannibalism (Foster 2008:91-92).

Another event that may have triggered the hostilities between the Indians and the French was an outbreak of smallpox that occurred shortly before the attack on Fort Saint Louis. Many Indians who fell victim to the smallpox outbreak died and those who lived may have blamed the French for this misfortune and sought revenge. In Cabeza de Vaca's account his men were sick and the illness spread to the Indians. The Indians were prepared to kill the Spanish after the death of many of their own because they blamed the Spanish for the illness of their people. This means that the Indians were aware that their illness and misfortunes were caused by some sort of force that the Europeans brought with them and may have seen it as reasonable grounds to take vengeance (Ricklis 1996:147).

Alonso de León [Jr. and Sr.] and Juan Bautista Chapa: (Period II)

It had not taken long for the Spanish to hear of the French fort in Southern Texas (one of La Salle's explorers had been captured by the Spanish and taken to Mexico City for questioning), an area which the Spanish laid claim to (Wolff 1962:3; Salinas 1990:24). The Spanish attempted to find this fort, and La Salle, during several expeditions between 1686 and 1689. One of the expeditions in 1689 was sent out from Mexico, led by Alonso de León (the younger) who was guided by Jean Géry, a Frenchman from La Salle's party that had been captured by the Spanish in 1688 (Foster 2008:94). When de León's party reached the Rio Grande they encountered Indians who immediately fled by swimming across the river. De León attempted to make contact with these Indians but they shot at him. De León and his men returned to their camp but left

behind some items as a sign of peace. The next day de León and twenty of his men set out to attempt to make contact with these Indians again in hopes of obtaining a guide. The gifts had not been touched but fifty Indians came out of a nearby wooded area. De León tried to persuade the Indians to approach him. He left a knife and some cloth in a tree and he and his men walked away. After some distance the Indians approached the gifts and took them, leaving behind, in exchange, bundles of feathers. The Indians would follow de León and his men for some time afterwards but always from a distance (Salinas 1990:24-25). Since the Indians encountered here were close to the Rio Grande in South Texas, these were likely from the Coahuiltecan group.

After a few more days of travel, de León and his men encountered thirty Indians near the present day boundary of Cameron and Hidalgo Counties. These Indians "made hostile gestures while two men played on flutes" (de León cited in Salinas 1990:25). Near this same locality, de León found an area with a mass of footprints which he estimated to belong to approximately three hundred Indians and speculated from the arrangement that the Indians had participated in some sort of ceremony (Salinas 1990:25, 132).

De León would never find La Salle, as La Salle had been assassinated a day prior to de León reaching the coastal area (Chipman 1992:78). De León's 1689 expedition had finally found the remains of the settlement, Fort Saint Louis, but the fort had already been abandoned. The Indians he encountered there (Karankawas) had some French books and other French artifacts. These Indians also had three captive children: Robert, Lucien, and Marie Madelaine Talon (siblings of Jean Baptiste and Pierre Talon) for whom De León bargained with the Indians to release (Wolff 1962:4).

Jean Géry, the aforementioned Frenchman who was captured by de León had a relationship with the South Texas Indians that was very different than those we read in most accounts. Géry had come to live as one of the Indians, had taken an Indian wife and had a child by her and was even considered a respected leader amongst his tribe as well as by nearby allied tribes. Géry had learned to speak the language of the tribe with whom he lived and had also learned to speak the languages of many local and distant tribes. De León had heard the news that a Frenchman was seen within a large Indian encampment by a resident of Tlaxcala. De León set out to find this Frenchman to obtain information about the location of La Salle's fort after three failed expeditions. In May 1688 de León found Géry. De León writes that Géry was living in a large Indian encampment where he was surrounded by about 300 warriors who may have been bodyguards. At the time that De León had met Géry, Géry had already been living with this tribe for three years. Géry had been sent out by his party to befriend the Indians in this area so that they would become subjects of the king of France, but during his mission Géry settled down with the Indians and had taken a wife. He told de León that in the prior year (1687) a group of Frenchmen had traveled to the area to visit him. Géry does not mention La Salle himself in this account, but it is possible that La Salle was within this group. In either situation it does mean that La Salle's crew had been among the South Texas natives as well as the Karankawa. De León took Géry captive and used him as a guide in his 1690 expedition to find Fort St. Louis. On the way back to Mexico the de León party returned to Géry's encampment (Foster 2008:118-119). According to Juan Bautista Chapa, an unofficial but informational historian, when Géry returned there was a large celebration in honor of his return involving four different tribes and almost 500 individuals counted by Chapa

himself (Foster 2008:120). De León offered two steers as a sign of friendship toward "Géry's Indians." However, since Géry was a captive he was to travel to Mexico with de León shortly after this celebration. De León had developed a sense of respect and friendship toward Géry. Géry escaped Spanish authorities some time after crossing the Rio Grande and returned to his family, much to the dismay of his friend de León (Foster 2008:119,121).

De León's father also played a great role in our knowledge of the Karankawa and the Coahuiltecans. Alonso De León (the elder) was an eyewitness account of a ceremony involving peyote. Troike (1962:945) gives the following translation of the account, dated from 1649:

> "…the Indian men and women begin to dance in one or two circles around the fire…until night is already dark, singing in their fashion whatever words they want, without having meaning, only harmony, and they sing them so harmoniously that one [person] is not discordant from another, but [rather] it seems [like] a single voice. Everyone who wants to joins in this group: sometimes a hundred, at other times more or less. They drink the peyote ground up and dissolved in water; this drink intoxicates in such a manner that is makes them lose consciousness and they remain, from the movement and the wine, on the ground like dead persons. They choose among two or three of such as these, and with some beaks from a fish called aguja…they scratch them from shoulders to ankles and to the wrists, from whence flows a quantity of blood, and with it they smear them all over the body. They leave them in this condition until they are over their drunkenness."

He, along with Juan Bautista Chapa who continued the work of de Leon Sr. after his passing, recorded the names of over three hundred and fifty Indian groups (Salinas 1990:4). De León Sr. writes that in northern Nuevo León alone there were hundreds of small bands and each band had its own language. He also describes several forms of ritual cannibalism and mentions that the Indian populations were being damaged by

European diseases (Foster 2008:124). Alonso De León Sr.'s accounts also tell of a colder and wetter period (in the 1650's) than we find today. De León Sr. describes each Indian group as having a different language but with otherwise similar cultures. He also gives a description of how the Indians cooked sotol, yucca, and lechuguilla for two days and three nights. His accounts even state that the Indians of the Rio Grande Delta were visited by members of foreign tribes that came from several hundred miles from the north and northeast. "De León identified the major trade routes that connected the Monterrey area with the Gulf of Mexico to the east and with Chihuahua to the west" (Foster 2008:114).

José de Escandón: (Period III)

In 1746 José de Escandón started a massive colonization program in the Province of Nuevo Santander in the area now known as Tamaulipas. The reason for this colonization program was due to trouble with Indians in eastern Nuevo León. Several thousand Spanish families, along with military escorts, were led into thirteen localities where towns were established. Each family was given free land and ten years of tax exemption along with other economic opportunities (Salinas 1990:14, 22).

The first phase of this plan was exploration of the area. Documents recording these travels were kept and within there are at least thirty-one named Indian groups for the Rio Grande Delta (Salinas 1990:19). Escandón's report noted that the Indians hunted deer and birds, and fished; the men went naked and the women wore only skirts of animal skins or grass, and that they had long distance communication in the form of smoke signals. The only weapon he saw used by the Indians was the bow and arrow. The largest of these groups were called the Comecrudos (those who eat raw foods) by the

Spanish and it is from this group's leader that Escandón obtained many of the names for his report. The Comecrudo language appears to have been the dominate language spoken by Rio Grande Delta groups but it was by no means the only language spoken by all thirty-one Indian groups listed by Escandón (Salinas 1990:29-30,125,145).

A supplement to Escandón's list comes from an anonymous author whose information seems to be connected to and based on Escandón's report. The anonymous author gives Spanish meanings to the native names of eight Indians groups north of the Rio Grande River. The Spanish meanings sometimes give a clue to the practices or appearance of each group. These names, as listed and defined by Salinas (1990:29) are as follows:

1. Lugplapiaguilam: *chiles mochos*. "Mutilated chiles," according to Salinas, this is likely a word the Spanish used instead of "penis" to perhaps indicate the males of this group modified or mutilated genitalia.
2. Masa cuajulam: *los que andan solos*. "Those who travel alone."
3. Paranpa matuju: *bermejos los hombres*. "Red the men." Red was a color of body pigment used for some Indians on special occasions so this name might be referring such a practice.
4. Percacug: *los que se amarran sus partes con una bolsita*. "Those who tie up their parts (genitalia, according to Salinas) in a small bag."
5. Perpecug: *cabezas blancas*. "White heads."
6. Peupuetem: *los que hablan diferente*. "Those who speak differently."
7. Segujulapem: *los que viven en los Guiachs*. "Those who live in huisache thickets."

8. Sepin pacam: *los salineros*. "Those who mine or make salt." This was probably referring to groups who lived near salt lakes.

One group reported by Escandón is unusual because they are very dark skinned and distinctively of African descent. Early Caribbean settlers had brought African slaves with them so it is possible that the group were the descendants of survivors of wrecked slave ships who intermarried with the local Indians (Miller 1980:12).

Other Documents

Jean Beranger (Period III)

Jean Beranger was a French navigator who sailed near Corpus Christi Bay in the 1720s. Beranger reported seeing a town built with houses made of hide-covered huts, something also seen by Joutel and La Salle (Ricklis 1996:113). The people of this town, which Beranger estimated to consist of about five hundred people, stored large amounts of fish which they dried and stored; these people were more dependent on such marine resources and did not cultivate crops (Carroll 1983:22 sited in Ricklis 1996:114, and Foster 2008:97). Other notes that Beranger made on the natives' diets included bread made out of acorns, ashes, and "hemp." They ate a lot of fish which was "half raw" as well as a lot of oysters and "hemp." Because hemp is not native to North America it is likely that Beranger was referring to some fibrous plant that he could not identify (Ricklis 1996:114). Ricklis (1996:115) suggests that this plant may have actually been cattail roots, a plant that when pounded could be grilled to make a flat bread, and it was also mentioned, in Cabeza de Vaca's observations, to be a food staple of the Indians in the coastal region. Beranger also noted that the Indians he encountered used a certain words: *captenne*, and *cousila* which he believed came from the Spaniards. The word *couslia* was

used by the Indians to refer to their knives, very similar to the word *cuchillo*, the Spanish word for knife (Ricklis 1996:125). Beranger's account also attests to how friendly the Karankawas could be as they offered his men food and helped them gather enough acorns to fill several casks (Ricklis 1996:147).

Agustin López de la Cámra Alta (early Period IV)

Ten years after Escandón's inspection of 1747, Agustín López de la Cámara Alta performed another inspection tour. According to Salinas (1990:30-31) he recorded fourteen Indian groups for the Rio Grande delta. He mapped the locations of nine of these groups on his official report. Four the groups lived some distance north of the Rio Grande River within the four counties that make up the Lower Rio Grande Valley. These four groups were:

- The Catanmepaque: Located in northeastern Hidalgo County southeast of a lake known as La Sal del Rey. These peoples may have used the lake as a natural source for salt to be used for their food and for trade.
- The Comesecapemes: Located on the boundary of Cameron and Willacy counties.
- Gumesecapom: Located in northwestern Willacy County near a salt lake now known as La Sal Vieja.
- Uscapemes: Located in Cameron County just north of present-day Brownsville.

Alta noted that all these Indians were tattooed. Men were only tattooed on the face and women were tattooed on their faces and bodies.

Spanish Missions and Documents from 1757-1886 (Period III-IV)

Most Indian groups of northeastern Mexico and the Rio Grande delta disappeared from records by 1825. Only a handful of groups were still known in 1886 (Salinas 1990:140). This decline in Indian population also occurred along the coastal area with the Karankawas. It was during this time period that Indians were being displaced by the Spanish from the south and the Apaches, who were themselves fleeing from European powers. In addition to being killed by other Indians moving into the territory, the local Indians were also dying of European diseases (Black 1986:42). The few remaining South Texas groups began to enter Spanish missions. By 1828 the only Indian groups living in the region were the Lipan Apaches, the Comanche (who only went to south Texas to raid Spanish settlements) and a few surviving Karankawa by the coast (Black 1988:42-43).

As early as 1690 the Spanish had started building missions in Texas to secure the northern border of New Spain from the French. The missions attracted various Indian tribes and the Spanish attempted to convert them to Catholicism. Later some missions were built specifically for the purpose of keeping and converting Indians. Some missions would fail and others were unusually successful (Ricklis 1996).

Spanish Missions and the South Texas/Northeastern Mexican Indians

Most of the missions built in this area were along the lower Río San Fernando or the south bank of the Rio Grande. Salinas (1990:148-162) discusses eight of the Spanish Missions and their Indian populations in his book, *Indians of the Rio Grande Delta*. The first mission built in the area was *Santa Teresa de Alamillo* (1646). The mission was abandoned by 1682 and its Indians moved to another mission the *San Nicolás de Agualegus*. The Indians at this mission typically only used the mission for short periods

at a time. It was abandoned in the early 1770s when Frair Diego Vázquez died. The Indians left the mission to go back to a hunting and gathering life style. The mission *Nuestra Señora del Rosario de Cabezón de la Sal* was established in 1749 but was destroyed in a flood in 1752. The mission was rebuilt a mile from the San Fernando village. The mission would have been rebuilt and moved a total of four times within ten years but other Indians would continue to use abandoned missions. *San Joaquín del Monte of Reynosa* was established in 1750, thirteen miles from the city of Reynosa. Three Indian groups lived here for a part of each year but most of the year they stilled lived as hunters and gatherers. The Indians attempted cultivation but usually ate their crops too quickly to last through the seasons. The *Divina Pastora de Santillana of Camargo* was established in 1749 but only lasted one year. *San Agustín de Laredo of Camargo* was established in 1749 and was a more successful mission than most. By 1752 this mission housed 359 Indians from seven different groups. The Indians living here resided in adobe brick houses and had fields where they grew corn, beans, squash, watermelons and cantaloupes. Some Indians even had their own personal small fields. Sometimes the Indians gained missionary approval to hunt deer and gather wild fruits. Documents list many Indian groups up until 1818 but it seems that the Indians here were able to maintain some of their ethnic identity until the late nineteenth century. *Purísima Concepción of Mier* was established in 1753 but appears to have only existed in name. *San Francisco Solano de Ampuero of Revilla* was established in 1750. This was another mission at which Indians only stayed for a small portion of the year. A count in 1770 claims that only twenty-five Indians were found at the mission and these Indians left frequently. Unfortunately most of the accounts of this period, at least those that have

been found, do not refer much to the cultural traits of the Indians in this region (Salinas 1990:165).

Spanish Missions and the Karankawa

In the early 1720s, the mission of *Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo* was established near what was Fort Saint Louis mainly for the purpose of converting inland coastal groups. The mission did not succeed in converting the Indians who quickly returned to their original lifestyle. Another attempt was made in the 1750s with the establishment of a new mission, *Nuestra Señora del Rosario de los Cujanes* (a term used to refer to the Karankawas in the eighteenth century). This mission also had little success and was abandoned by the 1780s (Ricklis 1996:127). In the 1790s a Franciscan missionary was established, Nuestra Señora del Refugio, for the sole purpose of converting the Karankawas. The Karankawan leader even recommended that a mission be built on the coast in their home land and all his (the Karankawan leader) people who were Christians would bring the non-Christian Indians to the mission to be converted (Rickles 1996:153). By the early 1800s the Spanish were on better terms with the Karankawan. Jean Louis Bernaldier, a French naturalist studying Texas Indians stated that the "Carancahuases [Karankawas] of today are less ferocious than those of the past century. They can be considered as mission Indians, half-tamed" (Berlandier 1980:380-381 cited in Ricklis 1996:155). The same account by Berlandier states that the Carancahuases considered themselves Christians, some even wearing crosses round their necks. They would even bring their newborns to the missions to be baptized (Ricklis 1996:155).

Unlike the documents pertaining to the Indians of South Texas and Northeastern Mexico, the documents pertaining to the Karankawa groups do contain more cultural references. The problem lies in the bias of the authors of such documents. Many of the documents written displayed an ill light upon the Karankawa in order prove that these Indians needed submit to the Christian religion (Scaedel 1949:132). In the eighteenth century two Spanish missionaries, Juan Agustin Morfi and Gasper de Solis, gave harsh accounts of the Indians. De Solis claimed that the Indians he inspected at Nuestra Señora del Rosario in 1767-1768 were "…all barbarous, given to idleness, lazy and indolent…they prefer to suffer hunger, nakedness and lack of shelter, which they do not suffer when they are in a mission…They are…given over to all kinds of vice, especially the vices of lasciviousness, robbery, systematic thieving and dancing" (Wolff 1969:10). Both de Solis and Morfi gave accounts that marked the Karankawa as cannibals. Morfi described a Karankawa ceremony as follows:

> "At the place they hold the mitote they drive a big strong stake into the ground. To this they securely tie the unhappy prisoner; they build a big fire around him…when they should the funeral instrument called *cayman* all begin to dance in a circle carrying in their hands well-sharpened knives of flint, or iron or a piece of shell. When they see fit they go up to the patient, cut off a piece of his flesh, pass it over the fire, and dripping with blood, they eat it in sight of the victim, accompanying this with incomparable gestures and horrible voices. In this way they go on tearing the victim to pieces until he dies. Some do not put this flesh near the fire but eat it raw, making themselves festive by spotting their faces with blood…After they eat all the flesh, they divide the bones among themselves, and those who are able to get a piece, go about continually gnawing and sucking it, until they consume it….When the captive does them serious harm, they do not take the trouble to use knives, but tear off his flesh with their teeth and devour it raw" (Cited in Schaedel 1949:132 and Newcomb 1972:77-78).

These accounts are obviously vastly different from the accounts left by Cabeza de Vaca who stated that the Karankawa (although he did not call them that) were shocked by the cannibalism they saw from the Spaniards. The difference may reside in the fact the Karankawa only cannibalized for religious/magical purposes, but never out of hunger like some Europeans had done. Many American Indians, including Texas Indians, ate pieces of their dying enemies for magical properties or revenge. In a magical/religious sense it was a way to obtain an enemy's qualities such as bravery or power, but it was also the ultimate revenge (Newcomb 1972:78). It may be that the Karankawas found cannibalism out of hunger to be as repulsive as Christian Europeans found cannibalism for religious/magical reasons. Other documents claim that the Krankawas had two deities, *Pichini* and *Mel*, and that their shamans were called *Comas* (Schaedel 1949:133; Newcomb 1972:79).

The exact reason for the shift from hostility to peaceful interaction between the Spanish and the Indians is unknown but it does seem to have begun in the 1790s. One theory is simply that the Karankawas grew tired of conflict. Another is that the Karankawa were aware that they and their South Texas neighbors were quickly dying out and coming to peace with the Spaniards was one way to preserve themselves. The Spanish missions would also have been able to protect the Karankawa from their enemies who had invaded from the northwest, the Comanche. The Karankawa preferred to keep their distance from the Comanche by staying at missions near the coast, which would also allow them to flee into the confusing terrain of lagoons, islands and marshes.

Dr. Albert Samuel Gatschet on the Karankawas and Other Tribes

Albert S. Gatschet was an ethnologist and linguist who published a small book about the Karankawas based on his observations as well as observations by various informants. As a linguist, Gatschet recorded many Karankawa words but also tried to establish linguistic affinities with other tribes. Gatschet found two groups of tribes he felt were related to the Karankawa linguistically and ethically: The Tonkawé and the "tribes on both sides of the lower Rio Grande" which he calls the Pákawa after one of the many tribes (Gatschet 1967:36). The Tonkawé, in general, are not part of the region of interest, but Gatschet believed they probably, at one point, lived near the Rio Grande as many of their traditions and some linguistic components are similar. The "Pákawa" Indians' dialects spread south of the Rio Grande into northeastern Mexico but their northern extent was unknown (Gatschet 1967:37-38).

Gatschet lists over twenty five different spellings of "Karankawa" used in the 1800s by the Spanish, American/English, and French. The term came from a group to the south of the Karankawa and it means "dog-lovers" or "dog-raisers." This means that even other tribes recognized the fox-like "voice-less" dogs kept by the Karankawa. The Tonkawé called the Karankawa the *Kéles* (wrestlers) or *Yákokon kappa-i* (barefooted, without moccasins). The Tonkawé also used these names for the lower Rio Grande Indians, showing some cultural correlation between the two. The Lipan-Apaches called the Karankawa *Nda kun dadéhe*, "the people who walk in the water" (Gatschet 1967:43-44). Although it may seem trivial, these names given to the Karankawa by other groups allow us to know what aspects of the culture other tribes noticed.

Gatschet's ethnographic account of the Karankawa contained many interesting points, some similar to those of Cabeza de Vaca and others completely different, which is not surprising considering that the culture probably had changed in the three hundred years between the observations of these two men. Gatschet's description about the physical characteristics of the Karankawa was based on the information of his informants as Gatschet had no means of accumulating anthropomorphic measurements of them. All of Gatschet's informants, as well as witnesses from earlier reports, such as Jean Béranger's, state that the Karankawa men were "magnificently formed, strongly built and approaching perfections in their bodily proportions" (Gatschet 1967:56). Many of the people considered the Karankawa to be giants as one of Gatschet's main informants, Mrs. Alice W. Oliver, claimed them to about five foot ten inches (Gatschet 1967:56; Foster 2008:97). While this height may not seem particularly tall to us, we must keep in mind that the average height was lower in the 1800s than it is now. The female Karankawas were considered to be completely opposite in appearance, short and not pretty, but it was acknowledged that this was due to women having heavier work burdens than their male counterparts, a fact that even Cabeza de Vaca acknowledged (Gatschet 1967:57).

For the most part the Karankawa did not wear much in the way of clothing. Men wore a breechcloth made of skins and women wore a skirt made of deerskins that went down to the knees, a fact considered unusual by people in the 1800s. Clothing was typically not worn until a child reached the age 10. During cold winters the Karankawa would obtain blankets from the colonists and wear them, keeping them pinned together with thorns from the guisache plant (Gatschet 1967:60).

Men of the Karankawa tribe cared more for self-ornamentation then women did. They often put bright objects in their long hair and sometimes snake rattles so that a gentle noise would be made when they moved their heads. The women wore no ornamentation except for a deerskin bracelet, which both sexes wore only on their left wrists. Like a few other North American Indian tribes, the Karankawa had a custom of head flattening performed on young infants, but the Karankawa only flattened the forehead (Gatschet 1967:61-62). The Karankawa were tattooed on their faces, both men and women. When a woman from another tribe married into the Karankawa she was tattooed, it also seems from other accounts that when the Karankawa accepted someone into their tribe, that person was also tattooed in the same manner. Tattoos were blue and although the specific substance used to produce the blue pigment is unknown, it may have been charcoal, soot, or burned plum seeds (Gatschet 1967:62).

The Karankawa used simple methods to prepare their foods. Seeds and certain fruits were crushed by smashing them between rocks. Meat was usually boiled or roasted upon coals. Flat stones were set atop of fires for baking a kind of flat bread. From the settlers the Karankawa obtained bread (not flat bread), molasses, coffee and iron kettles (Gatschet 1967:59).

Karankawa dwellings were simple tent-like structures called bá-ak, and they housed seven or eight people. There were no seats in this lodge, instead the Karankawa sat, ate and slept on fur-skin mats (Gatschet 1967:63). Gatschet (1967:63) also mentions that the dwellings of the Comecrudos, a Coahuiltecan group, were constructed differently than those of the Karankawa. These dwellings were flat on top, and the sides were

covered with brushwood, old blankets or whatever materials could be found. One or two sides were open and the structures ranged from five to seven feet in height.

A minor, yet interesting note mentioned by Gatschet (1967:55) is that the Karankawa may have built mounds inland for there were many mounds in the prairie area that appeared to be man-made. The mounds were usually about ten feet apart but nothing was ever found in them.

Little is known about the Karankawa government other than they had two chiefs, one for civil government and the other a war chief. The civil chief was a hereditary position, passing through the male line. The war chief was probably appointed by the civil chief (Gatschet 1967:63).

Karankawa husband and wives were not known for showing affection toward each other but were known for showing affection towards their children, especially from mothers. Although the women were not known to be very chaste, informants report seeing few children typically. no more than two per family. Widows remarried as soon as possible (Gatschet 1967:65).

Gatschet states that the Karankawa were “anthropophagists” since, at least, the beginning of the nineteenth century. Although he, and other white men, found this act abominable, Gatschet acknowledged that this practice was found in many of the original Texan tribes including the Indians of the lower Rio Grande (Gatschet 1967:27). Like many other North American Indian tribes, the Karankawa did not cannibalize out of hunger but only out of religious/magical beliefs. The Karankawa religious beliefs were not fully understood but many Texans witnessed them performing ceremonies on the nights of full moons, or after very successful hunting or fishing expeditions. These

ceremonies always involved dancing. When the Karankawa smoked tobacco they also had a practice that may have been religious in nature: blowing the smoke first to the north, then east, west and south. They were also seen staring at the setting sun daily (Gatschet 1967:70-71). The Karankawa also would never give their true names to white people or Indians from other tribes for that matter. This habit came from a belief that if the true name is spoken after death then the spirit will be disturbed and come to take revenge upon him or her who disturbed their rest. If called by another name in a different language then the spirit would not be disturbed for only the knowledge of the native language was retained after death. This often led to the Karankawa having English or Spanish names. Sometimes the early Americans would even give particular Indians titles such as "Captain" or "Colonel." The Karankawa were more likely to keep these titles than their English or Spanish names which they changed often (Gatschet 1967:69).

The Karankawa had a form of sign language they used for speaking to foreign tribes. For long distance communication they seemed to be able to communicate through shrill whistles. For even further distances the Karankawa used smoke signals. Gatschet's informants claimed that the Karankawa could make over twenty shapes with smoke including diverging spirals, curling spirals, parallel lines, V-shapes, Y-shapes, zig-zag lines, etc. Although the informants did not understand how the Karankawa were able to make such shapes they claimed these signals to be as intelligible to other Indians (allied groups) as spoken language (Gatschet 1967:69-70).

How the Karankawa disposed of their dead is unknown but Gatschet (1967:67) ruled out cremation as there was little in the way of timber along the coast. However, the death of infants caused "gloom to reign over the camp."

Karankawa sports included competitive shooting for both distance and accuracy. The men were known to all be able to shoot at least eighty feet. Other sports included wrestling, ball games and hatchet throwing. None of the Gatschet's informants ever witnessed games of gambling amongst the Karankawa (Gatschet 1967:66).

Decline of Indian Populations

According to Gatschet, the major decline of the Karankawa nation occurred after 1835. "As long as the Mexicans had control of Texas, they were allowed to go their own ways; for the easy going colonists did not exclude them from their lands…But with the arrival of the more active Anglo-American race, all this underwent change" (Gatschet 1967:46). Land grants and the construction of agricultural lands led to increasing intolerance of the Karankawa (Gatschet 1967:46). Several reports make some mention of the Karankawa being in great decline. In 1843 a report stated that the remainder of the Karankawa tribe, which consisted of forty or fifty people, got permission from the Mexican government to settle south of the Rio Grande. Part of the group settled at the southern end of Padre Island and the other part went into Reynosa, Tamaulipas in Mexico (Baker 1875 cited in Gatschet 1967:49).

The Karankawa were reported to be seen in Reynosa since 1848. Many Mexican citizens accused the Karankawas of robberies and they (the Karankawa) were moved back and forth from Reynosa to Texas until a Texan citizen, Juan N. Cortina, gathered a group of rancheros and launched a surprise attack on the Karankawa, supposedly exterminating them. However, various witnesses claimed to have sighted Karankawa as late as 1872 (Gatschet 1967:49-51). It also seems that some Karankawa moved to what is now Hidalgo, County and joined the Pakawá or Pinto tribe, the Coahuiltecan tribes best

known for being tattooed. Taking refuge with these tribes, they were also tattooed and became indistinguishable from the South Texas tribes (Gatschet 1967:51).

According to Juan Bautista Chapa, the Northeastern Mexican Indian tribe populations declined dramatically due to European diseases, some groups had even been completely annihilated by the combination of these diseases and wars (Foster 2008:108). Most of the Rio Grande Delta Indian groups "disappeared from the historical record by 1825, and only a few were still known in 1886, when A.S. Gatschet visited an Indian community near Reynosa" (Salinas 1990:140). Martin Salinas (1990:140-141) lists additional factors, aside from diseases, that may have played a role in Indian population decline in the Rio Grande Delta area. These reasons include: (1) In the early history of Nuevo León, Indian rebellions and slave trade led to the "removal of numerous Indians;" (2) Many adult males were probably killed during Indian raids on Spanish settlements in the early eighteenth century; (3) Discouraged Indian parents sometimes sold their children to Spaniards to become servants; (4) Indian populations decreased in the area as some Indians left the area to find employment or reside in a Spanish mission; (5) Some Indians were so discouraged about their outcome and fate that they no longer desired to bring children into such a world and, (6) Children from marriages between Indians and early colonists were not considered Indian.

Conclusion

The history of the Rio Grande Delta area starts in the 1500s with the early colonization of Mexico and the adventurous journey of Cabeza de Vaca. After Cabeza de Vaca finds his way to Mexico the history of the area slows down until the misfortunate landing of La Salle's crew. With Alonso De León's (Jr. and Sr.) and Chapa's accounts

from South Texas and Northeastern Mexico, and the French along the coast, we get a picture of what was going on in the Rio Grande Delta from its early history to the quick decline of Indian populations. These accounts are still important to the prehistory of the Rio Grande Delta as the archaeological record supports very slow cultural change. Some of the activities witnessed in the historical period may have been practiced for hundreds of years prior to the Spanish colonization. A combination of archaeological and historical records allow for an understanding of what was culturally valued by the people of the Rio Grande Delta.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The South Texas-Northeastern Mexico area, also known as the Rio Grande Delta, the Rio Grande Plains, South Texas Plains, Nueces Plains (Hester 1995:427) and the Tamaulipan Biotic Province (TBP) (Presley 2003:1) is an area that has had relatively slow environmental change. Over 10,000 YBP the area was cooler and Ice Age megafauna sparsely roamed the area (Hester 1980a:36, Presley 2003:1). Early Paleo-Indian era points, Folsom and Clovis, have been found in the South Texas area (Hester 1995:434). Despite the lack of Paleo-Indian kill sites in South Texas, this does partially support the theory that the early peoples in this area hunted mammoth and mastodon as did their Plains Indian relatives. As the environment got warmer, the Ice Age ended and megafauna species died out, the Indians of the late Paleo-Indian period had to change their subsistence to smaller game. As a result we begin to see a change in hunting technology during the late Paleo-Indian period from long dart points to small dart points such as Angostura, Plainview, Golondrina, and Scottsbluff dart points (Hester 1980a:137).

The environment would continue to get warmer and drier and the human population continued to increase. This growth of human population is likely what made the hunting and gathering lifestyle very visible during the Archaic period. Larger populations can also be seen by the presence of relatively large Archaic cemetery sites

such as the Morhiss Site and Loma Sandia. Many of the grave goods at both these sites indicate a hunting and gathering lifestyle because many dart points, gouges, knives, choppers, scrapers, and hammer stones have been found at both these sites (Taylor and Highley 1995:650-657; Terneny 2005:64). Dental analyses at the Morhiss site showed a low carbohydrate diet, providing further evidence of the importance of hunting during the Archaic (Perttula 2001:31). Grinding slabs at Loma Sandia, however, do show that plant resources were also utilized for subsistence. Although no evidence of Archaic dwellings have survived the poor preservation conditions of South Texas, the location of these large cemetery sites by sources of water shows that Archaic peoples made their homes along-side or near bodies of water like rivers and streams. Not all Archaic sites are found near modern-day sources of water but there were more water sources during the Archaic than there are today (Hester 1980a:36).

During this period we also see an indication of sociocultural development. Personal decorative ornaments have been found at these sites in the form of bone and shell beads and pendants from both fresh water and marine sources. Loma Sandia has provided evidence of religious/ceremonial practices as well. A few burials of adult males have been found with grave goods such as antler racks, rattles and pipes. These were probably the medicine men, religious leaders, or group leaders of the time. Because these items have yet to be found with female or young male burials it can be assumed that this social status could only be held by adult males. Only adult females at Loma Sandia were buried with shark teeth, Abasolo points, and lumps of asphaltum (Taylor and Highley 1995:666; Perttula 2001:7). Although the exact meaning of these items cannot be determined, their specific placement in adult female burials is also an indication of some

sort of social status. For example, it may have been that only married females wore shark teeth ornaments; again, there is no evidence for this. Both genders were buried with dart points, but male burials were buried with a higher concentration of dart points, likely making them the more prominent hunters. Another indication of social status is burial method. While most burials were in flexed positions, there were a small handful of cremation burials. These cremation burials, due to their rarity, indicate the cremated individuals were different in some way than other members of the society. Cabeza de Vaca's account did mention that most individuals were buried at death, except for medicine men who were cremated. At Cabeza de Vaca's time, the burned bones of the medicine men were kept for a year but perhaps during the Archaic period, medicine men were simply cremated and laid to rest with a few mortuary offerings (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:61-62).

The Ayala Site and the Southern Island Site are also cemetery sites, but these sites were occupied during the Late Archaic period and the Late Prehistoric Period (Boyd and Perttula 2000:9-12; Terneny 2005). These sites contained artifacts that were similar to earlier Archaic sites, an indication that change was very slow in the South Texas area. There did appear to be an increase in decorative items such as bone and shell beads and pendants. Many of the shell ornaments were from marine resources. It is also during this Late Archaic period that the Brownsville Complex along the South Texas coast first becomes visible. Because the Brownsville Complex is distinguished by marine shell industry, the presence of higher amounts of marine shell ornaments in Late Archaic inland sites leads to the idea that the inland groups and coastal groups had more frequent contact with one another during this period (Hester 1980a:160; Terneny 2005:201).

Some Late Archaic sites also have evidence of trade contacts with Central Texas as large, thin bifaces from Central Texas have been found in such sites (Hester 2005:267). Late Archaic cemetery sites are generally found in more coastal regions but inland regions seemed to have mostly isolated burials. Because ethnohistoric and archaeological evidence shows that the Indians separated into smaller groups and moved inland during the summer and spring, these isolated burials may be due to deaths among the smaller groups further away from the coast during the summer and spring rather than a completely different cultural practice.

Hunting and gathering lifeways would continue through to the Late Prehistoric period. The South Texas prehistoric peoples had never practiced agriculture. Cabeza de Vaca's accounts make no mention of agriculture until he reaches Mexico but he does mention the movement of groups from one place to another to harvest prickly pears or mesquite beans (Hickerson 1998:214-215). Cabeza de Vaca had little impact on the Indians he encountered and it is highly likely that he was witnessing a lifeway very similar to the Late Prehistoric culture. The Late Prehistoric is marked by two fairly significant inventions, ceramics and the bow and arrow. The bow and arrow led to the development of specialized arrow points, which were generally smaller than the previous dart points (Hester 1980a:154). Loaf-shaped cobbles with transverse grooves have been found in some Late Prehistoric sites and perhaps served the function of arrow shaft straighteners (Hester and Hill 1975:14). Inland, ceramics were bone-tempered and fairly plain. Along the coast, ceramics were sand-tempered and some were plain while others were decorated. This was a significant point for South Texas archaeology because prior to the 1970s it was believed that the prehistoric South Texans never developed ceramics.

However, the origin of South Texas ceramics and the bow and arrow are still unclear but likely developed through cultural diffusion from Central Texas (Hester 1975:121-122; Hester 1995:446).

At this point in time it seems as though the Coastal and Inland peoples had started to have somewhat separate cultures. These would be Hester's "savannah adaptation" inland and the "maritime adaptation" along the coast (Hester 1975:121; Hester and Hill 1975:1, 23). The two adaptations were not completely separated. Marine shell artifacts could still be found in Late Prehistoric inland sites and a few arrow point types were common in both areas, such as the Perdiz type. The Late Prehistoric people may have been less mobile than before but still kept in contact with each other. Evidence of this can be seen in Cabeza de Vaca's account as well, as the groups did not move very far from one place to another until a major harvest. During these major harvests several groups would meet up and could communicate with each other through a shared language although their main language was not the same (Hickerson 1998:213-215). The maritime adaptation peoples, the Brownsville Complex and the Rockport Complex, subsisted mostly off of coastal resources but traveled inland during the summer and spring when the fish population declined (Ricklis 1996:35, 102-103, 107-108). The savannah adaptation peoples subsisted off of almost anything they could find. The faunal remains from these sites show a variety of mammals, reptiles and mollusks (Black 1986:124). The best resource areas were along streams and rivers in riparian microenvironments.

Aransas, Rockport and Karankawa sites can be found on top of each other indicating that coastal groups had little movement throughout time. However, inland, Late Prehistoric sites are rarely found on top of Archaic sites. Inland peoples had to

move to where water was available and because streams and rivers change courses over time, the inland peoples would have to have gradually moved their campsites according to these changes (Hester 1975:114).

The Brownsville Complex had fully developed a very complex shell industry. The Brownsville Complex sites have shown that the Indians residing in the area produced more shell artifacts than would be necessary. However, Brownsville Complex shell ornaments can be found in inland sites and even in Huastecan sites. Huastecan artifacts have been found in Brownsville Complex sites as well (Fagan 2005:313). The Brownsville Complex peoples must have had an extensive trade network based primarily on shell implements and ornaments.

The Late Prehistoric lifeway continued for a long period of time. As stated earlier, Cabeza de Vaca and companions had little impact on the Indians here and so his accounts give a better glimpse of the Late Prehistoric cultures than do Historic accounts. The first groups that Cabeza de Vaca encountered are considered to be from the historic Karankawa culture, direct predecessors of the Rockport Complex peoples. His accounts from his time as a wandering trade merchant show that the coastal peoples traded seashell artifacts and mesquite beans for inland animal skins, hard woods, and flint. The time he spent with the South Texas inland groups was harsh. He stated that these groups suffered from great hunger and although they knew how to make bows and arrows, they were too busy trying to survive to make them (Cabeza de Vaca 1983:92). This could be why many inland site skeletal remains have shown evidence of poor health.

The Rio Grande Delta Indians would continue to live their life of slow change until the Spanish started moving into Northeastern Mexico. They would then become the

victims of disease and the *encomienda* system, which was illegal but persisted because the law was not strongly enforced (Salinas 1990:15-16). As the Spanish continued to move into Texas they set up missions with the goal of converting and "civilizing" the Indians. For the most part, the Indians were not forced into the missions and entered them out of curiosity but many would leave as they did not enjoy the enforced lifestyle (Hester 1980a:160-161). Some Spanish artifacts are found in some sites, so the Indians may have taken the few aspects of Spanish life they did like, such as glass, which was good for making sharp arrow points. As other Europeans pushed other northern American groups south, such as the Apache and Comanche, and the Spanish moved north, the South Texas Indians were caught in the middle. Some sought the shelter of the Spanish missions for safety and converted willingly rather than die. Others were killed during skirmishes for resources or died of foreign diseases. By the late 1800s the various Indian cultures had nearly died out. The extent of elimination is hard to tell because children from marriages between Indians and Spanish were not considered to be Indian at all. Other groups were completely absorbed into the Spanish culture (Salinas 1990:140-14; Newcomb 1993:37). Although tragic, these events shaped the Mexican and Tex-Mex cultures we see today.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

SEQUENCE OF SOUTH TEXAS PROJECTILE POINTS

Sample Site	Point Types	Time Periods	Stages
Hinojosa Site	Cameron Perdiz Zavala Caracara Scallorn Fresno Starr		**Late Prehistoric** 1200-400 YBP
Southern Island Site	Catán Matamoros Desmuke Fairland Montell Ellis Frio Palmillas Ensor Marcos	**Late** 2400-1200 YBP	**Archaic** 8000 -1200 YBP
Loma Sandia	Abasolo Langtry Tortugas Carrizo Morhiss Lange Pedernales	**Middle** 4500-2400 YBP	
Chaparrosa Ranch has some pre/early Archaic evidence	Shumla Refugio (?) Early Corner Notched Horizon points* Early Basal Notched Horizon points* Bell* Andice*	**Early** 8000-4500 YBP	
No known sites, mostly isolated and scattered finds.	Angostura Plainview Golondrina Scottsbluff	**Late**	**Paleo-Indian** 11,500-8,000 YBP
	Folsom Clovis		

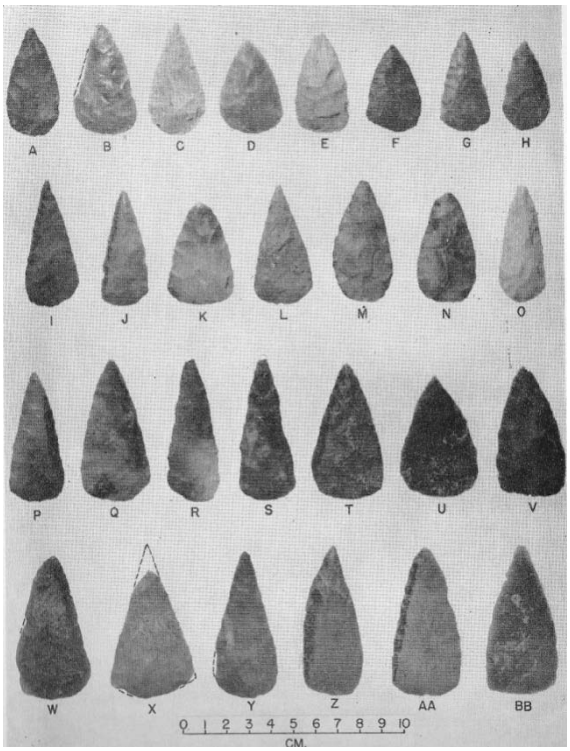
** Not discussed in Appendix A, see test pgs. 54-55.*

SOUTH TEXAS PROJECTILE POINTS
(In Alphabetical Order)

Abasolo, Dart Point

Time Period: Archaic

Description: Triangular to leaf-shaped blade. Base is convex or well rounded. Abasolo points are closely related to Tortugas points. They are usually about 4 to 6 cm in length and 2 to 3 cm in width but can be longer and/or wider. They are most common in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and Northeastern Mexico in Tamaulipas, Mexico (Suhm et al 1954:400).

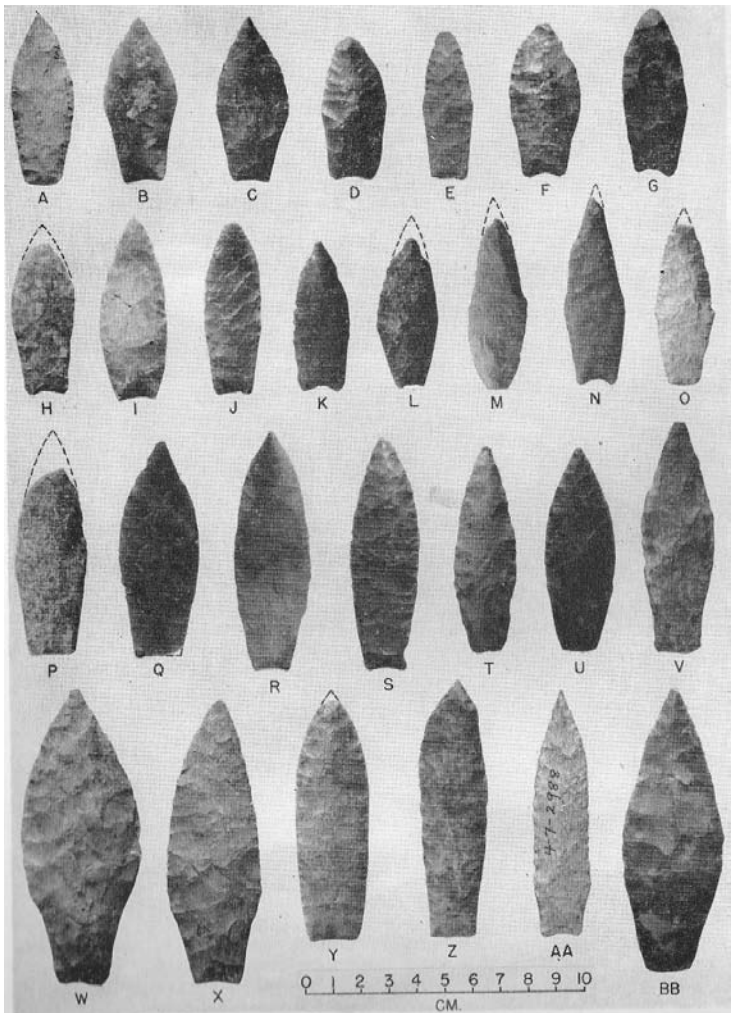


Abasolo Points (*Source*: Suhm et al 1954:401)

Angostura, Dart Point

Time Period: Paleo-Indian (late)

Description: Narrow leaf-shape point point with convex edges. Range from 5 cm to 10.5 cm in length, 1.8 cm and 4.2 cm at the widest point, and 1.2 cm to 1.8 cm at the base. The cultural association is still unknown but are around the same age as Plainview and Scottsbluff points (Suhm et al 1954:402).



Angostura points (*Source*: Suhm et al. 1954:403).

Cameron, Arrow Point

Time Period: Late Prehistoric

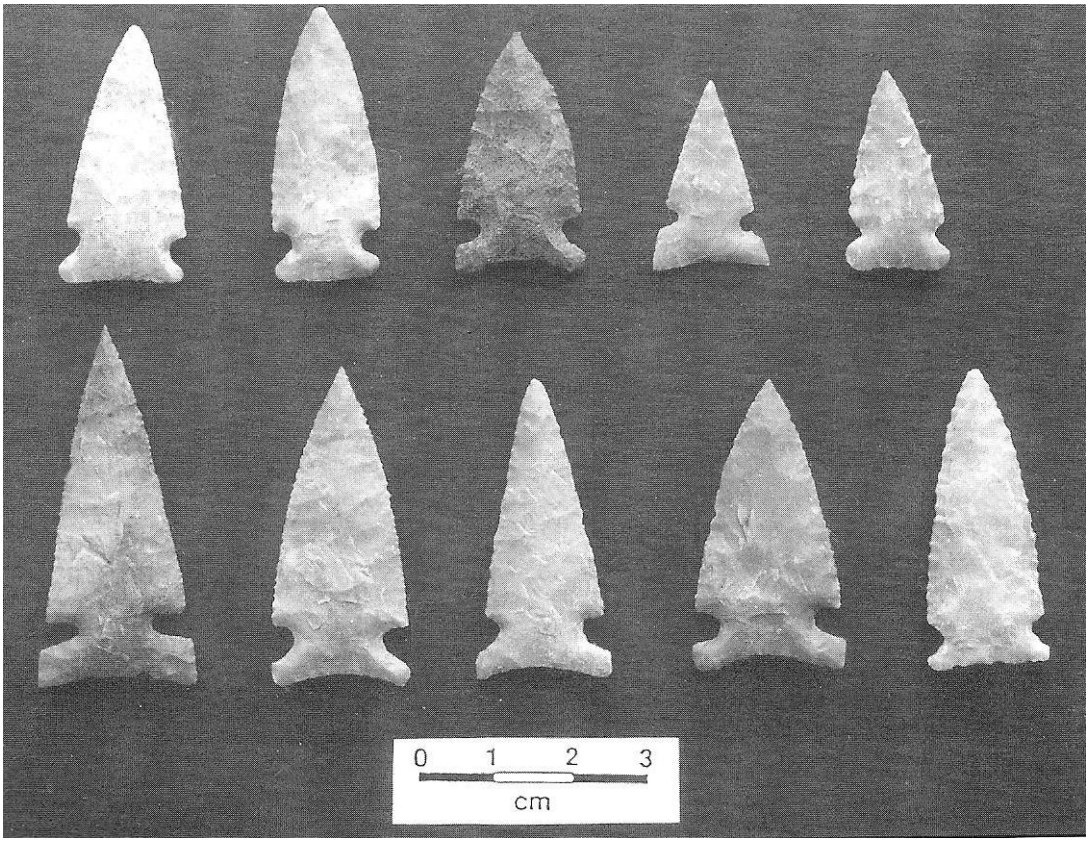
Description: Tiny, triangular points belonging to the Brownsville Complex. These types "had persisted into Historic times, as some specimens were made of glass" (*Source:* Hester 1980a:105).

Cameron points. (*Source*: www.texasbeyondhistory.net)

Caracara, Arrow Point

Time Period: Late Prehistoric

Description: Triangular point with a varity of sizes. Edges can be straight or slightly convex, and some edges are serrated. Bases are straight, concave, or convex. Basal ears are squared or rounded (Boyd and Perttula 2000a:5).

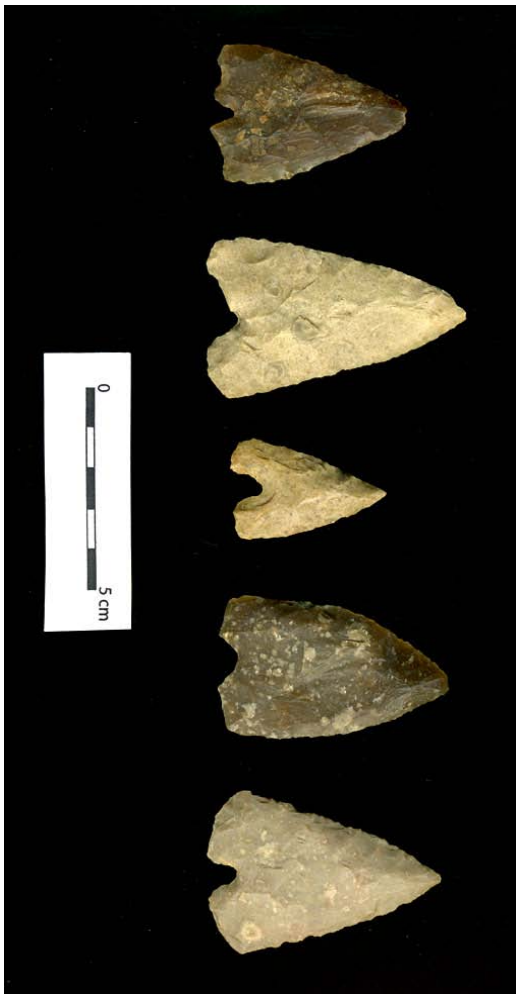


Caracara points from the Falcon Reservoir area. (*Source*: Boyd and Perttula 2000a:5).

Carrizo, Dart Point

Time Period: Archaic

Description "Triangular with deep basal notch. Found primarily in Dimmit, Zavala, La Salle, and Frio Counties" (Hester 1980a:98).

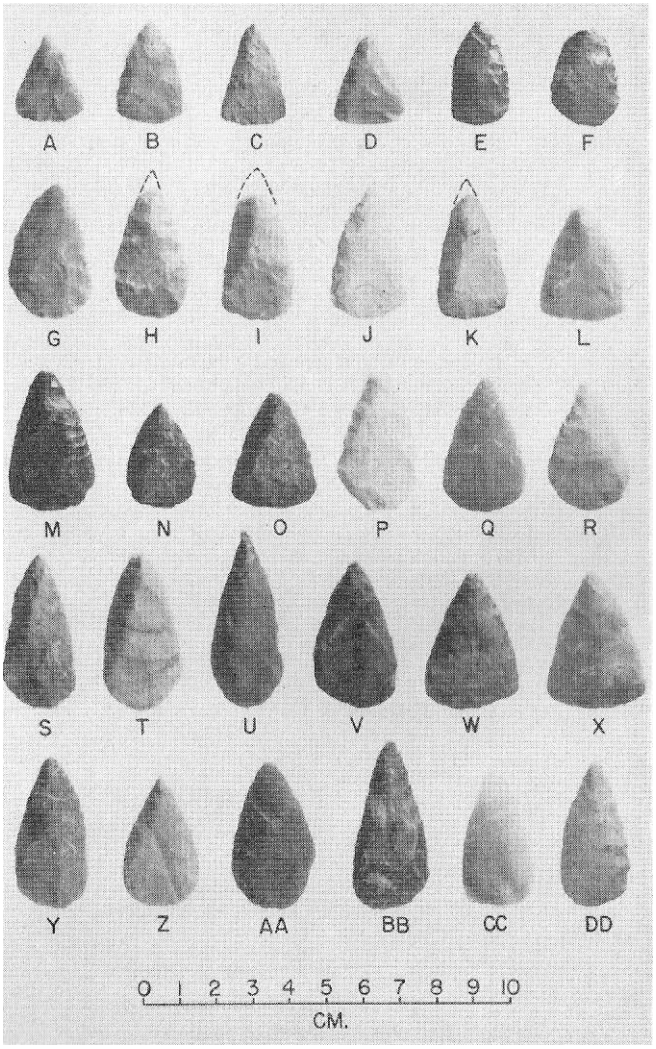


Carrizo points from TARL, Riley Collection. (*Source*: www.texasbeyondhistory.net).

Catán, Dart Point

Time Period: Archaic to Late Prehistoric

Description: Similar in appearance to Abasolo points but tend to be smaller. Range from 2 cm to 4 cm in length, and 1.5 cm to 2.5 cm in width (Suhm et al. 1954:410).

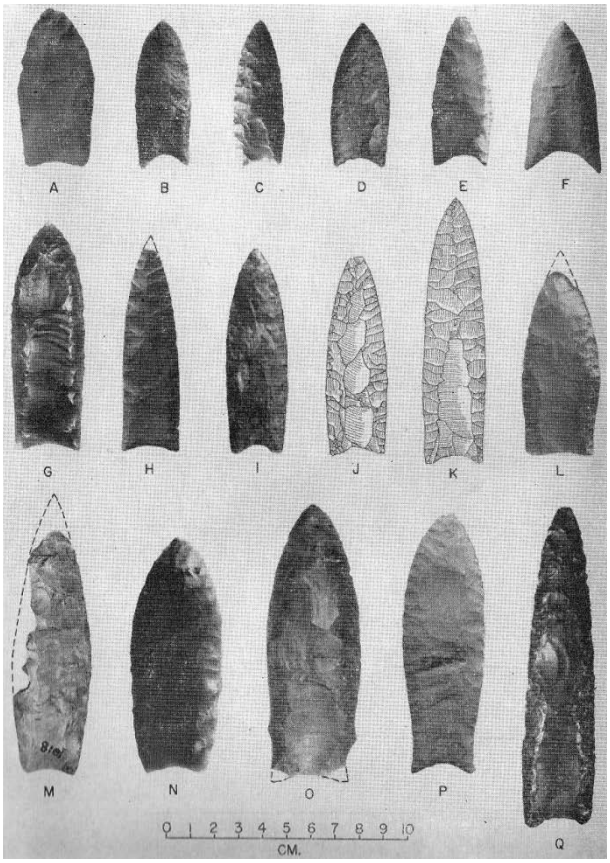


Catán points. (*Source*: Suhm et al. 1954:411).

Clovis, Dart Point

Time Period: Paleo-Indian

Description: Narrow, leaf-shaped dart point. One of the earliest known point forms. Edges are usually convex. Length varies from 6 cm to 14 cm, width from 2 cm to 4 cm. Most Clovis points are larger and heavier than Folsom points (Hester 1980a:98, Suhm et al. 1954:412).

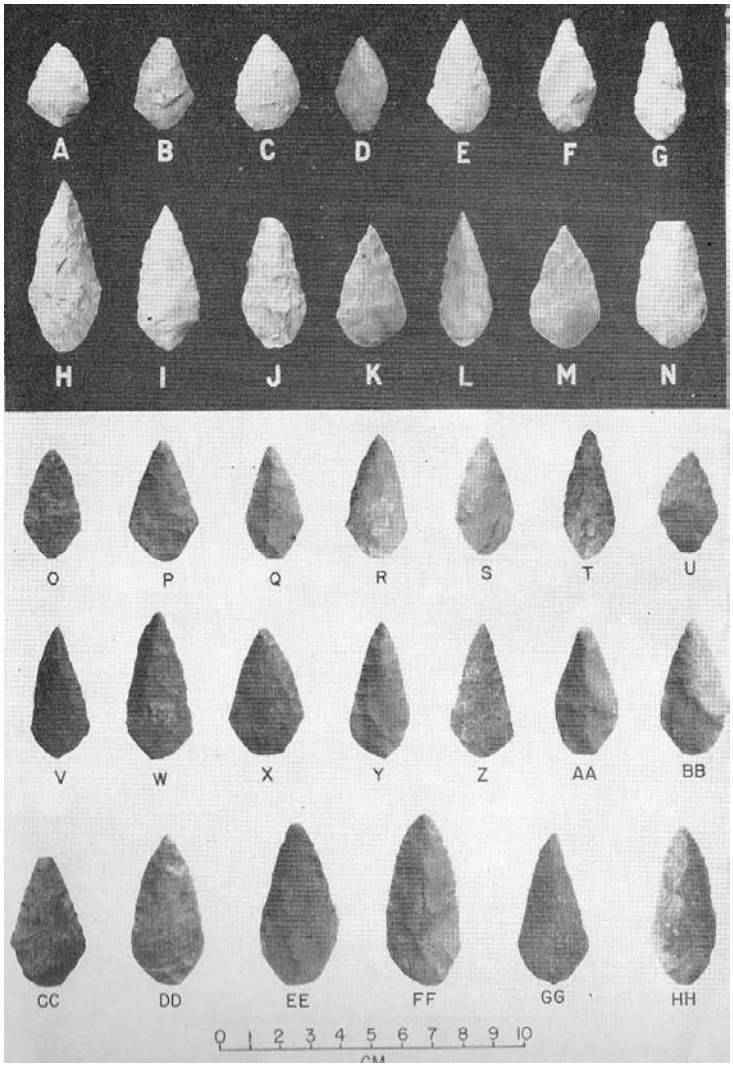


Clovis points. (Source: Suhm et al. 1954:413)

Desmuke, Dart Point

Time Period: Archaic

Description: Small, shoulderless, lozenge-shaped points. Edges are straight to convex on the blade, and usually straight at the base. Range from 3 cm to 5cm in length, and 1.5 cm to 2.5 cm in width. Cross Section is thick and diamond shaped (Suhm et al. 1954:416).

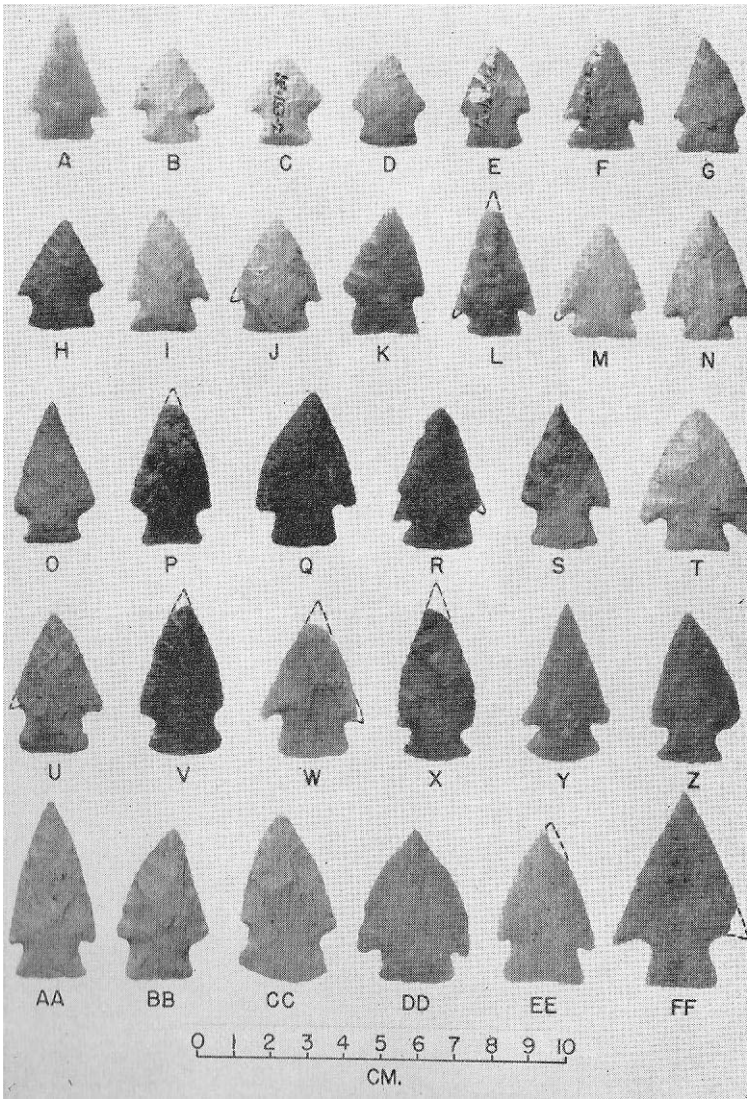


Desmuke points, A-N are made of white quartizite, O-HH are made of various flints. (*Source*: Suhm et al. 1954:417).

Ellis, Dart Point

Time Period: Late Archaic

Description: Stemmed, short, triangular blade with straight to convex edges. Shoulders are barbed. "Stem expands toward base but never as Broad as shoulders; stem edges tend to be straighter than in most types with cut-out corners. Bases straight to convex" (Suhm et al. 1954:420).

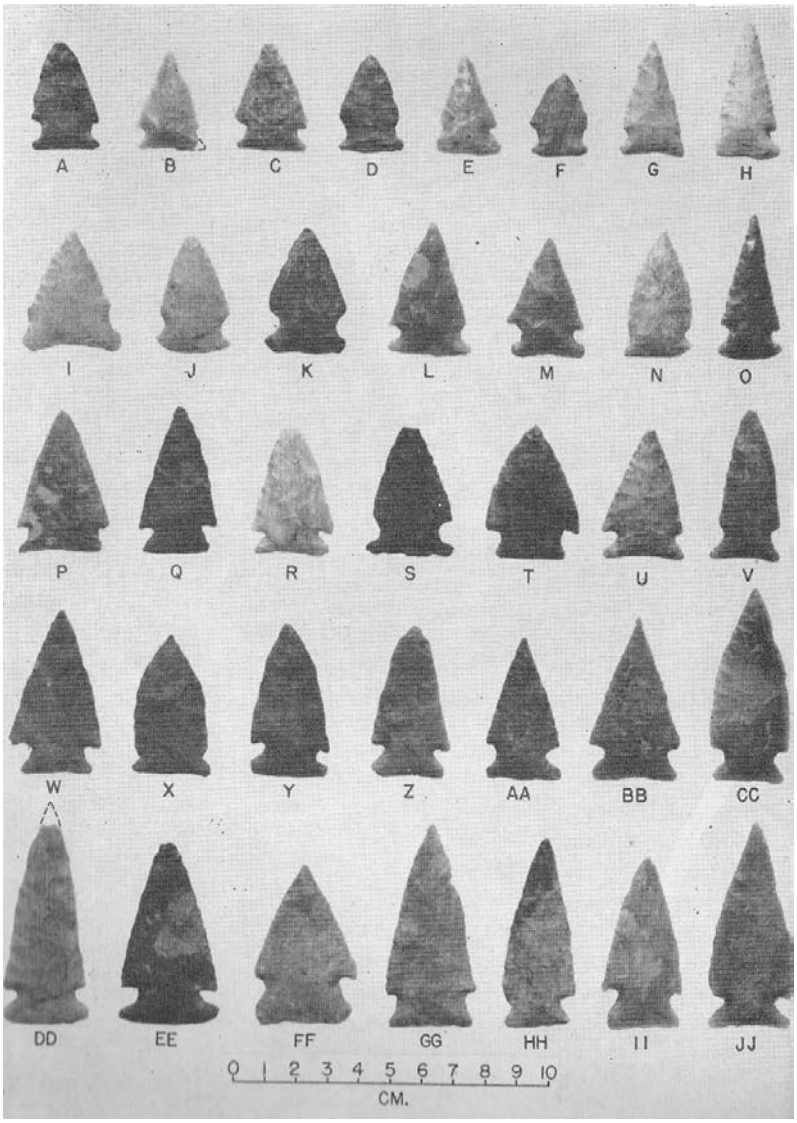


Ellis points. (*Source*: Suhm et al. 1954:421).

Ensor, Dart Point

Time Period: Archaic

Description: Blade is triangular and varies considerably in length and width. Edges are fairly straight but can be slightly convex and occasionally finely serrated. Stems are broad across the neck, notches are shallow and bases are usually wider than the shoulders (Suhm et al. 1954:422).

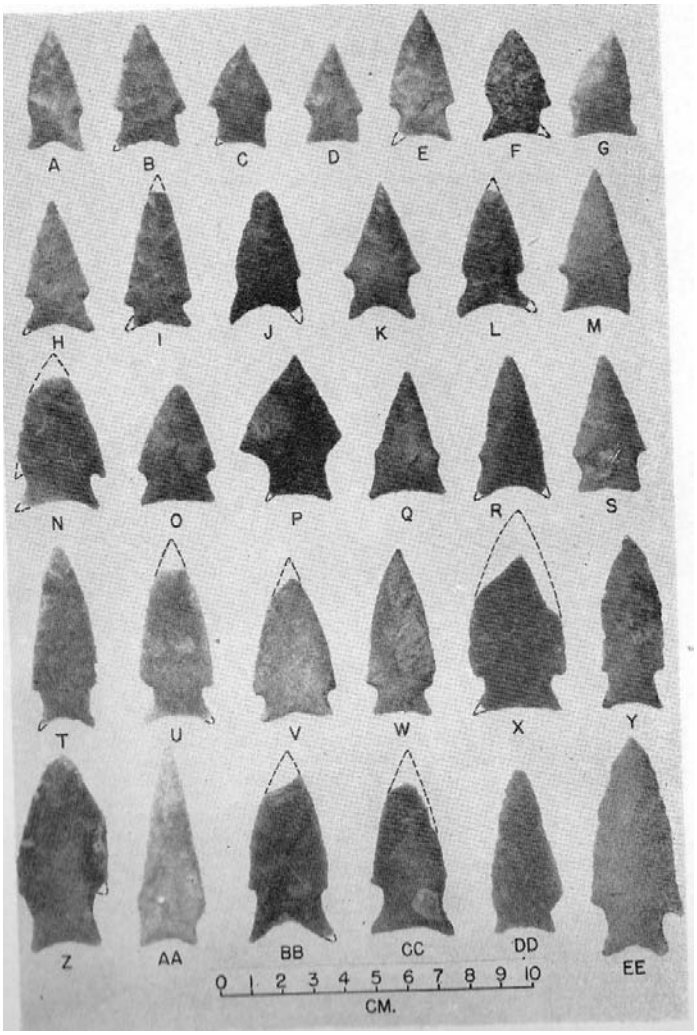


Ensor points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:423).

Fairland, Dart Point

Time Period: Late Archaic

Description: Triangular blade, edges are convex but sometimes straight, base flares so that it is as wide or wider than shoulders. Length ranges from 3.5 cm to 7 cm, width ranges from 2 cm to 3 cm and stem is 1/5 to ½ of total point length (Suhm et al. 1954:424).

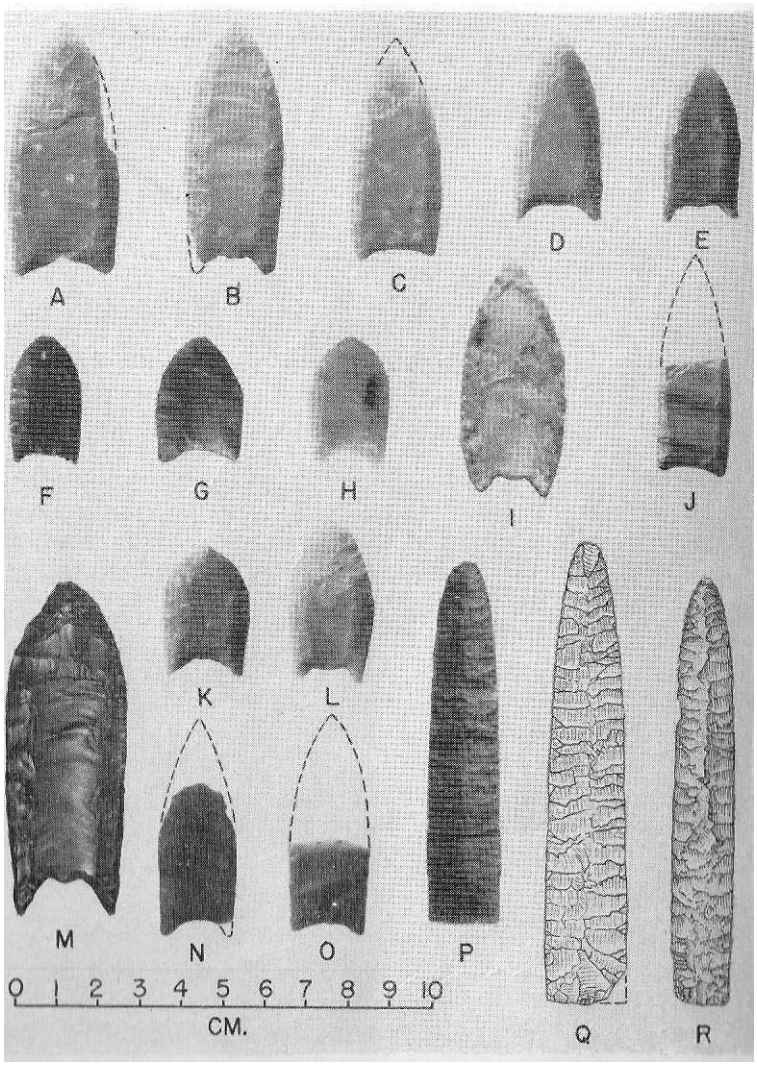


Fairland points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:425).

Folsom, Dart Point

Time Period: Paleo-Indian

Description: Long, thin, leaf-shaped, fluted point. Base is always concave. Flute sometimes runs the full length on both faces (Suhm et al. 1954:426, Hester 1980a:101).

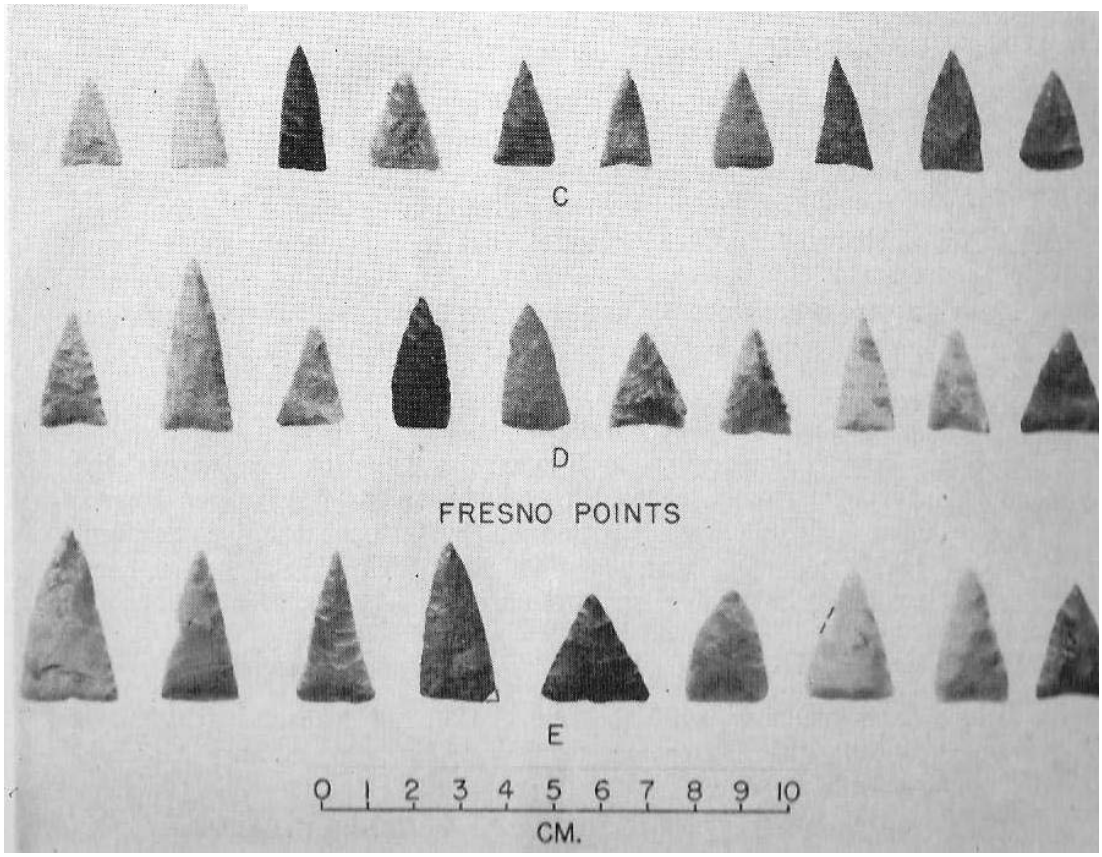


Folsom points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:426).

Fresno, Arrow Point

Time Period: Late Prehistoric

Description Simple, triangular points. It is unknown if the Fresno arrow point is an actual point at all, they may be preforms of triangular arrow points (Hester 1980a:106).

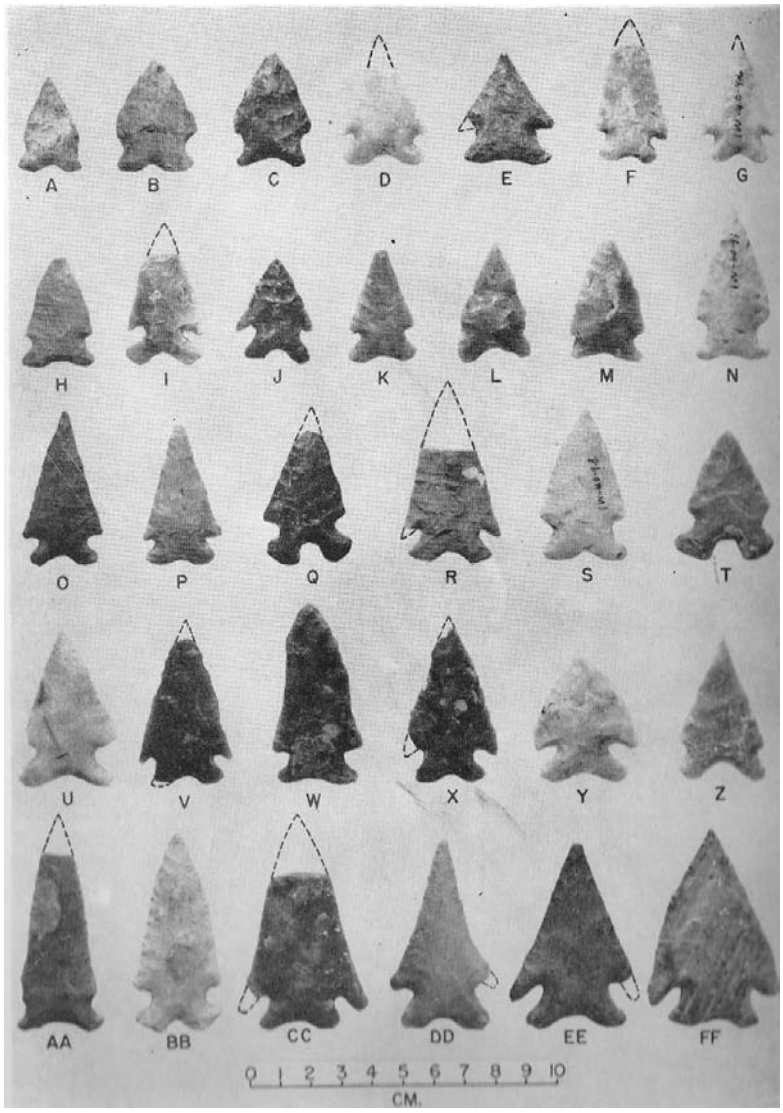


Fresno points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:499).

Frio, Dart Point

Time Period: Late Archaic

Description: Short, triangular blade. Edgres are usually straight or convex. Strongly developed shoulders with barbs. Stems are formed by corner notches and are as wide as, or wider than, shoulders. Base is concave (Suhm et al. 1954:429).

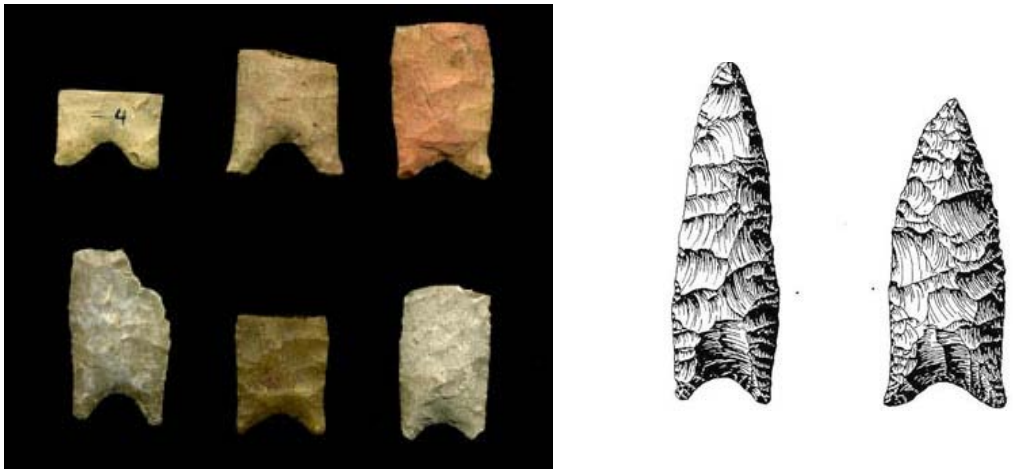


Frio points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:429).

Golondrina, Dart Point

Time Period: Paleo-Indian (Late)

Description: Long lanceolate point. Flared basal corners and deep basal concavity (Hester 1980a:101).

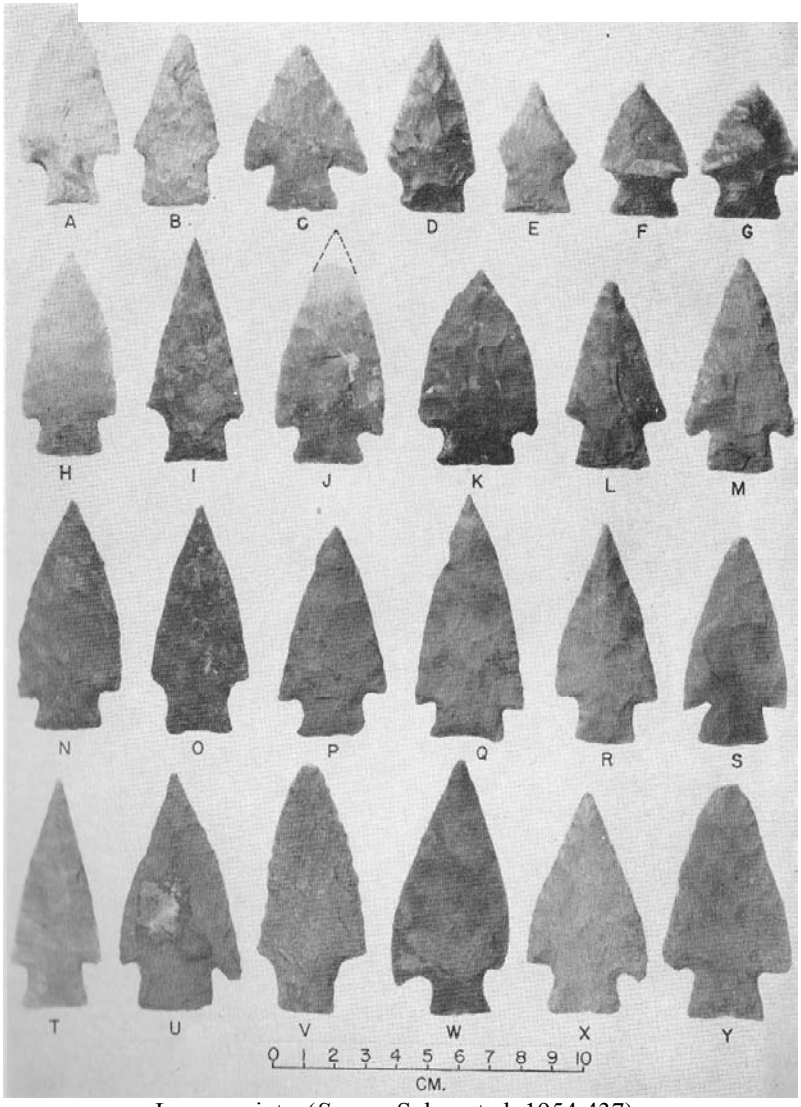


Left: Six broken Golondrina points from TARL, Broom Cooper collection. *Right*: Drawings of complete Golondrina points, drawn by Richard McReynolds. (*Source*: www.texasbeyondhistory.net)

Lange, Dart Point

Time Period: Archaic

Description: Large triangular blade, straight to convex edges, prominent shoulders with good barbs. “Base is almost straight, but slightly concave or convex” (Suhm et al. 1954:436).

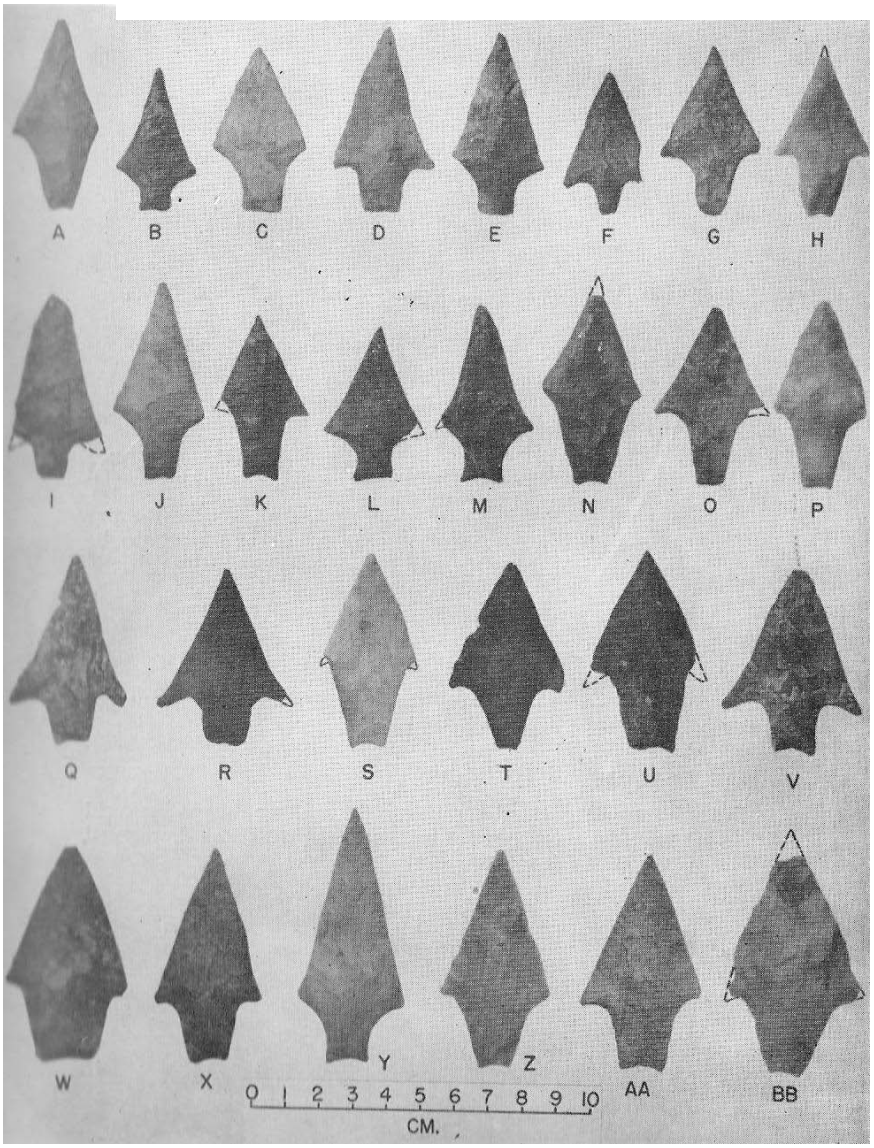


Lange points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:437).

Langtry, Dart Point

Time Period: Middle Archaic

Description: Very thin, triangular blade with straight to concave edges. Prominent shoulders with often uneven barbs. Stems are long with concave bases (Suhm et al. 1954:438).

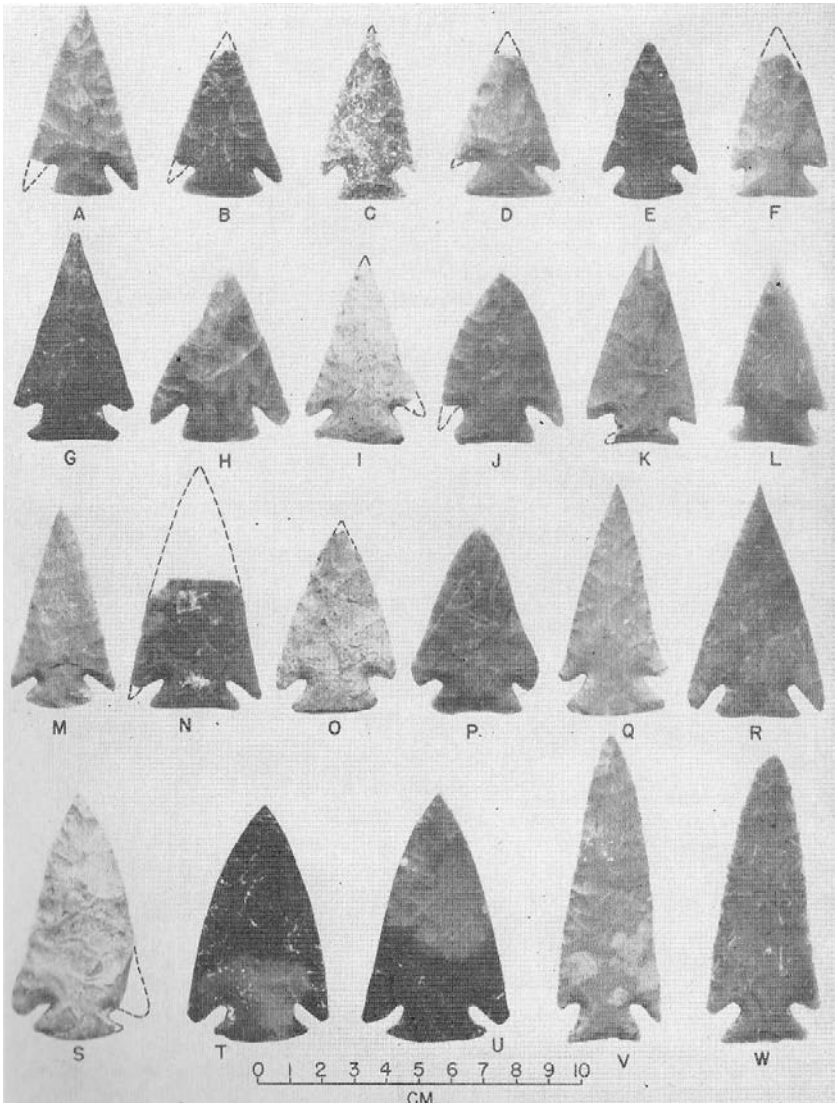


Langtry points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:439).

Marcos, Dart Point

Time Period: Late Archaic

Description: Broad, triangular blade with straight or slightly convex edges. Deep corner notches create barbs in line with the base. Bases are straight to convex (Suhm et al. 1954:442).

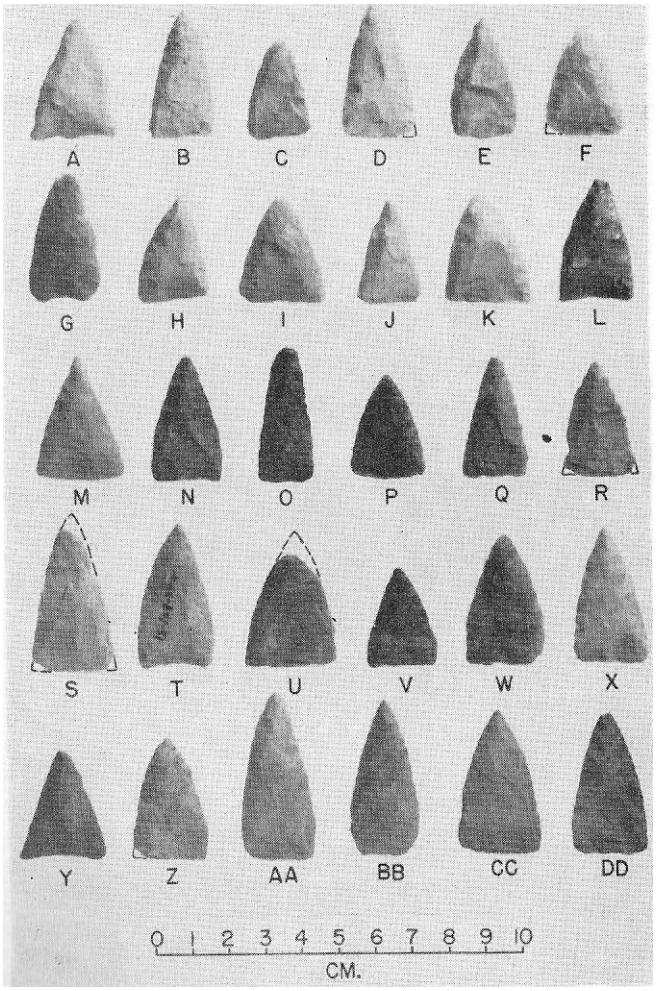


Marcos points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:443).

Matamoros, Dart Point

Time Period: Late Archaic into Late Prehistoric

Description: Small, thick, triangular points. Very similar to Tortugas points but smaller (Hester 1980a:101-102).

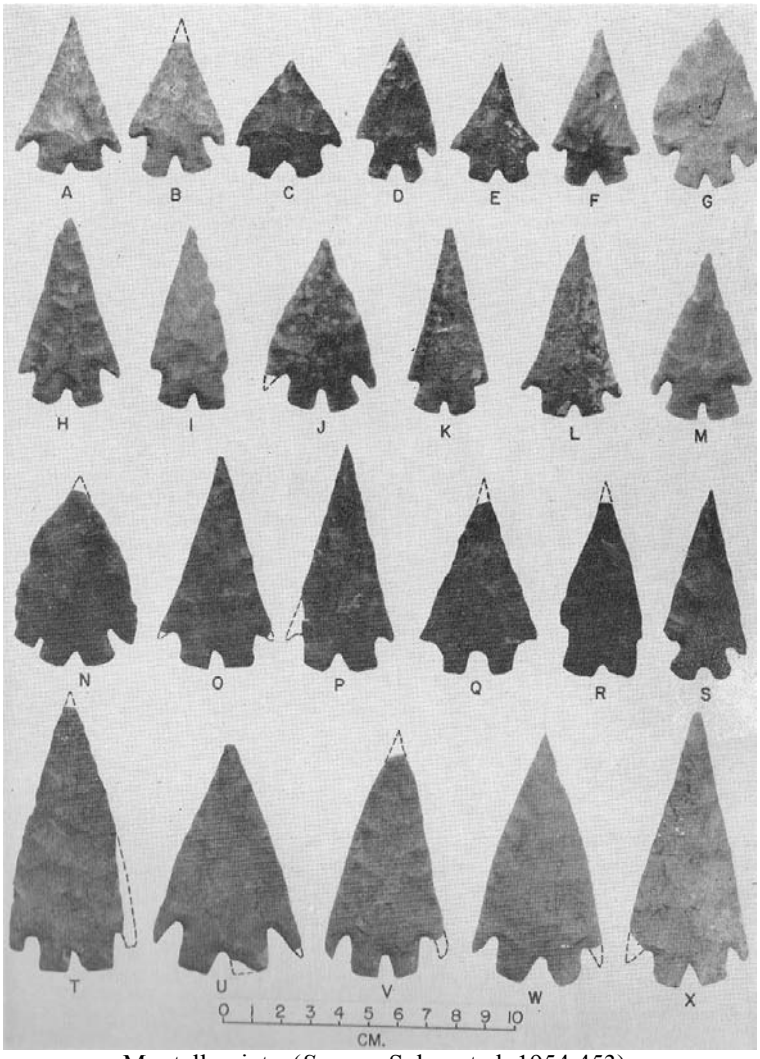


Matamoros points. (*Source* Suhm et al 1954:449).

Montell, Dart Point

Time Period: Late Archaic

Description: Triangular blade with straight, convex, concave or recurved edges. Shoulders are usually barbed but can also be squared. Stem is split in the center and has a deep V-shaped notch (Suhm et al. 1954:452).

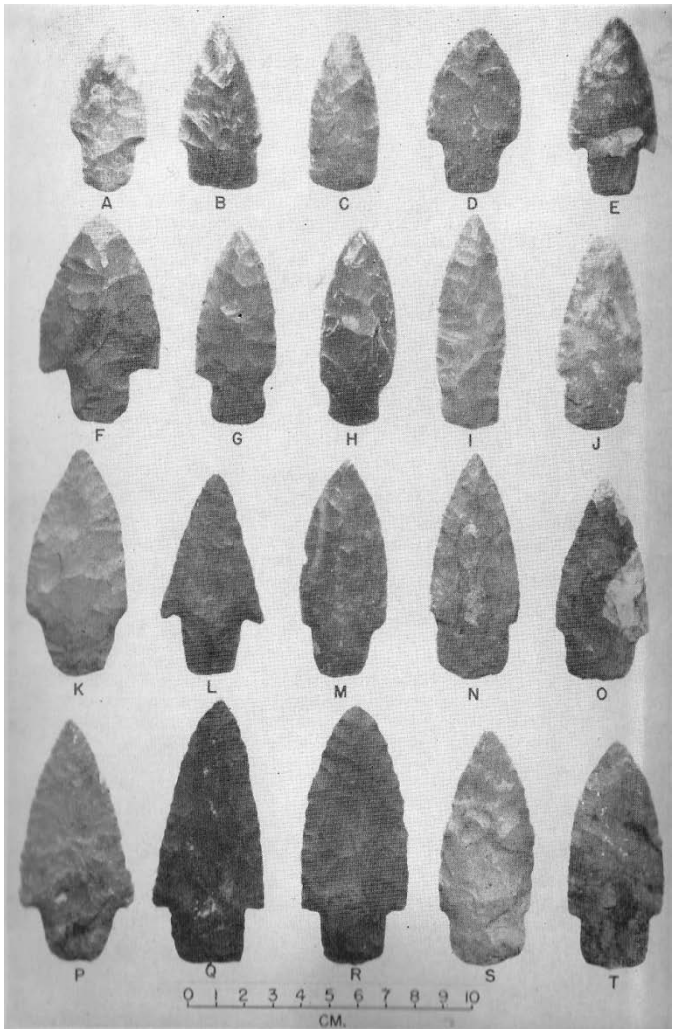


Montell points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:453).

Morhiss, Dart Point

Time Period: Archaic

Description: Triangular blade with convex edges, small shoulders, barbs are small or not present. Stem is broad with a convex base. Often found with traces of asphaltum on stem (Suhm et al 1954:454, Hester 1980a:102).

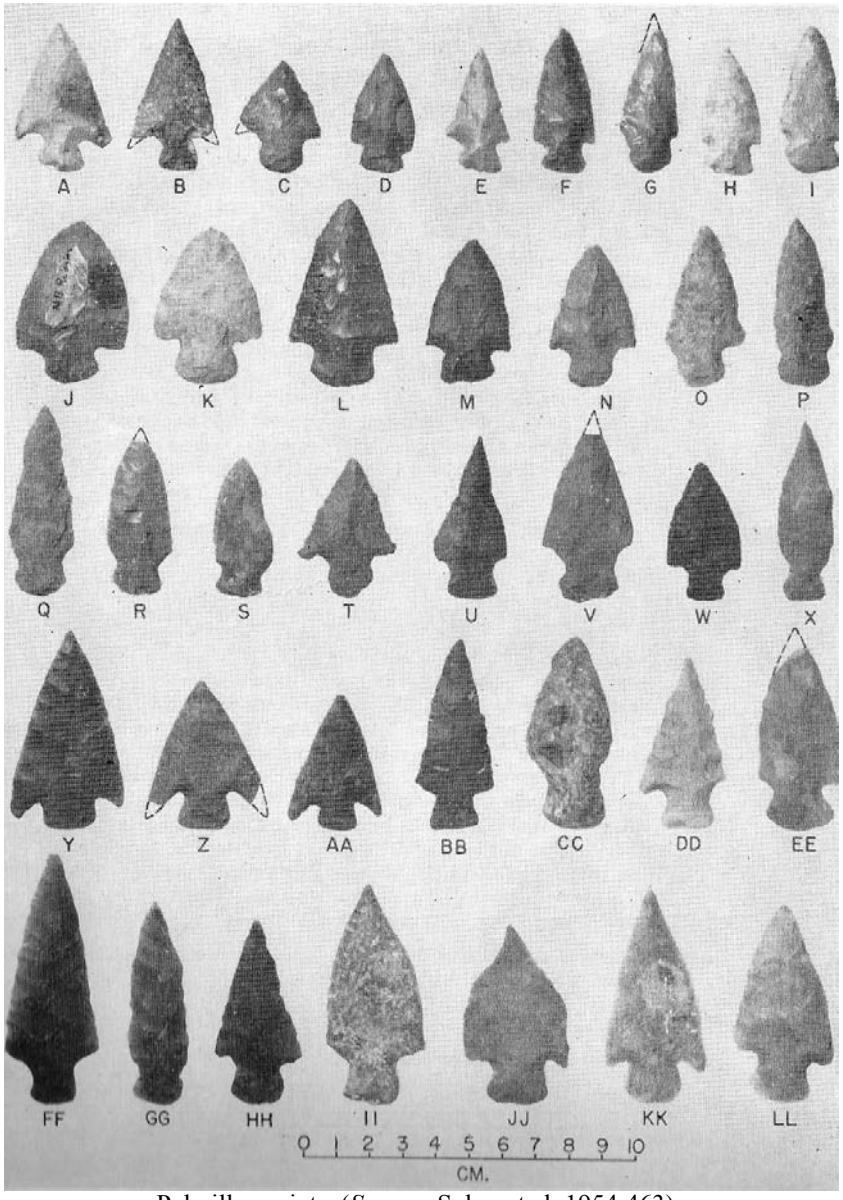


Morhiss points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:455).

Palmillas, Dart Point

Time Period: Archaic

Description: Small, triangular or leaf-shaped blade. Edges are straight to convex. Main characteristic is a small, rounded stem with expanded, rounded sides and a convex base (Suhm et al. 1954:462 Hester 1980a:102).

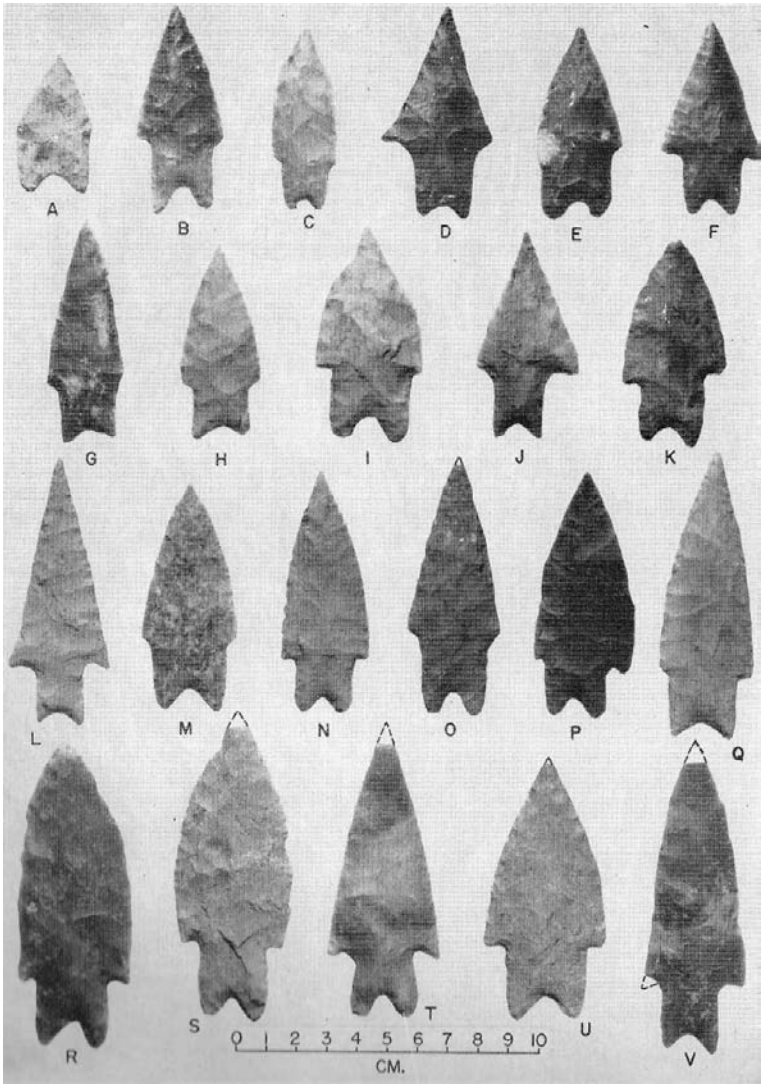


Palmillas points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:463).

Pedernales, Dart Point

Time Period: Middle Archaic

Description: Blade is triangular or leaf-shaped and varies in dimensions and Proportions. Straight or convex edges. Stem is semi-rectangular with a concave U-shaped base (Suhm et al. 1954:468).

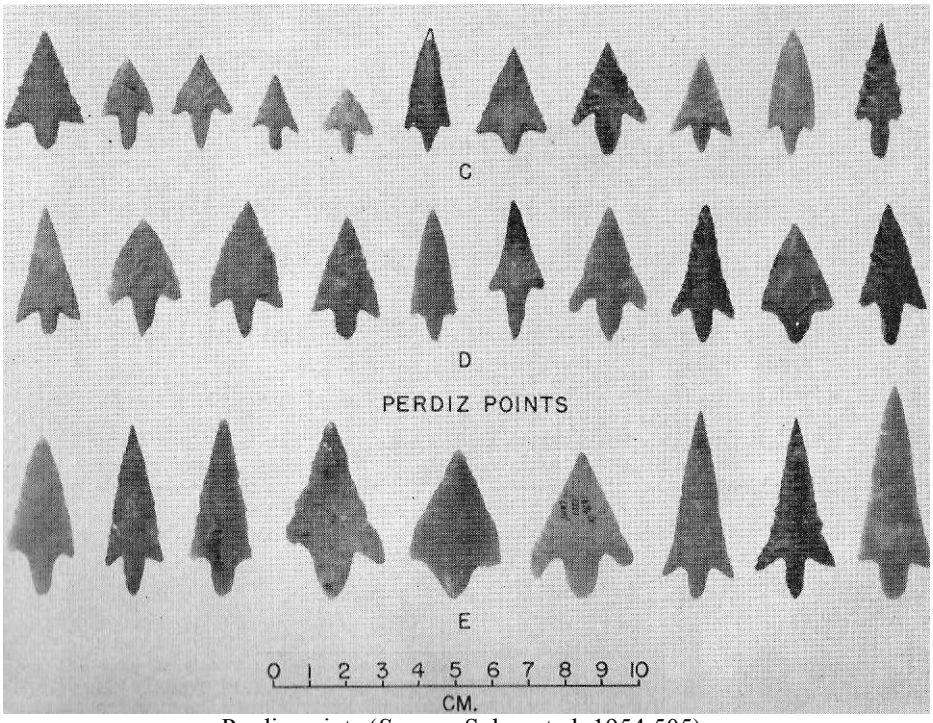


Pedernales points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:469).

Perdiz, Arrow Point

Time Period: Late Prehistoric

Description: Triangular blade with fairly straight edges. Shoulders are sometimes at a right angle to the stem but are usually barbed. Stem comes down to a sharp point at the base. Is one of the most common points in South Texas along with Scallorn points (Suhm et al. 1954:504, Hester 1980a:106).

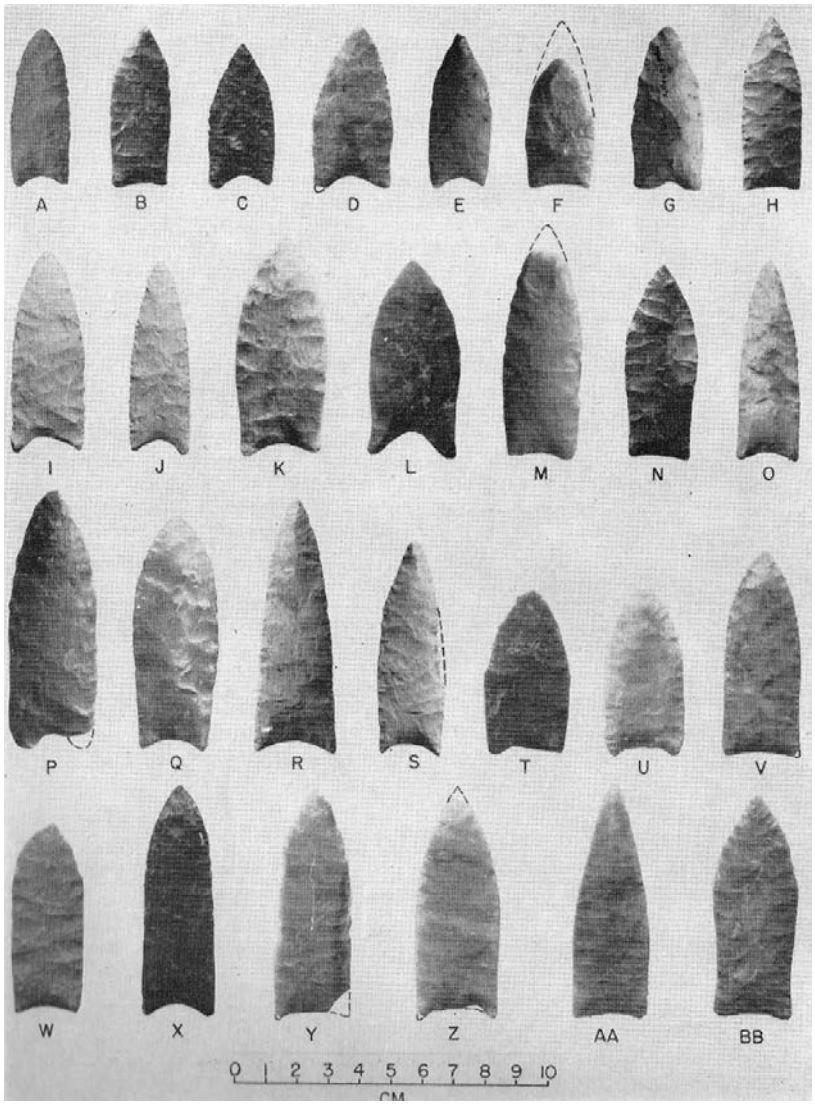


Perdiz points (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:505).

Plainview, Dart Point

Time Period: Paleo-Indian

Description: Similar to Golondrina points but is older. Lanceolate with parallel edges, and concave base (Suhm et al 1954:472).

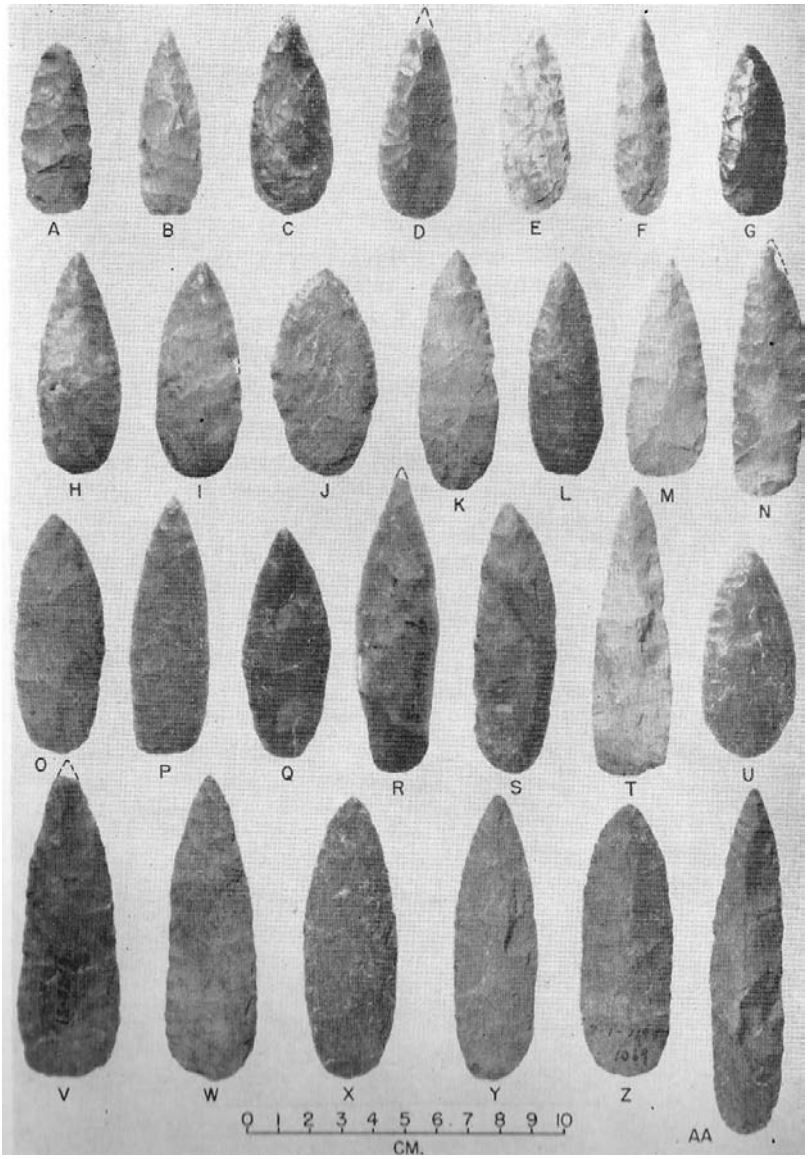


Plainview points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:473).

Refugio, Dart Points

Time Period: Archaic

Description: Unstemmed, round-base points. May not be dart points at all; might be preforms or knives (Hester 1980a:102).

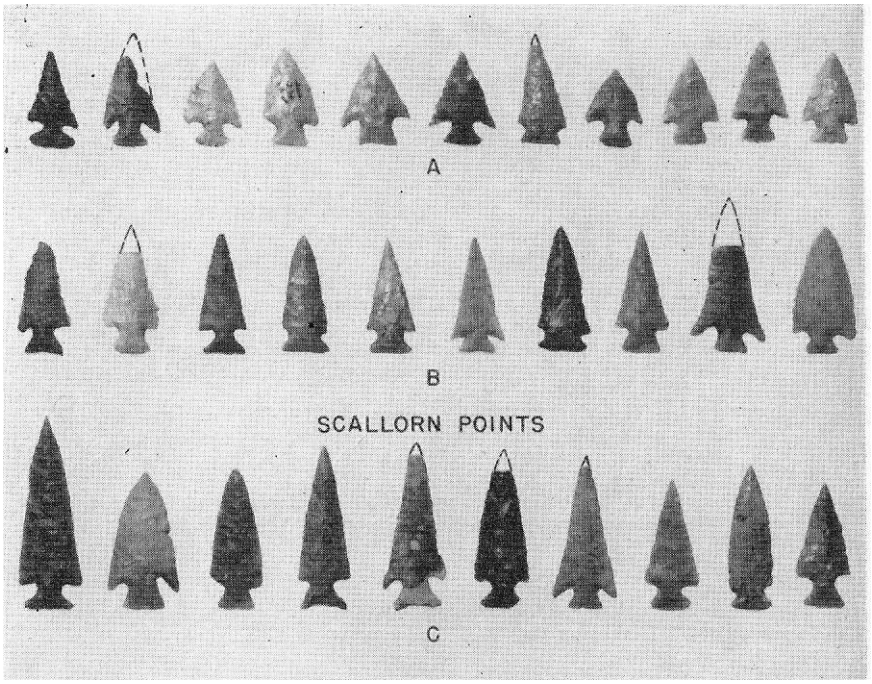


Refugio points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:475).

Scallorn, Arrow Point

Time Period: Late Prehistoric

Description: Broad to slender triangular blades with straight to convex edges. Shoulders are usually well barbed but may also be squared. Edges are finely serrated. One of the most common points in South Texas (Suhm et al 1954:506, Hester 1980a:107).

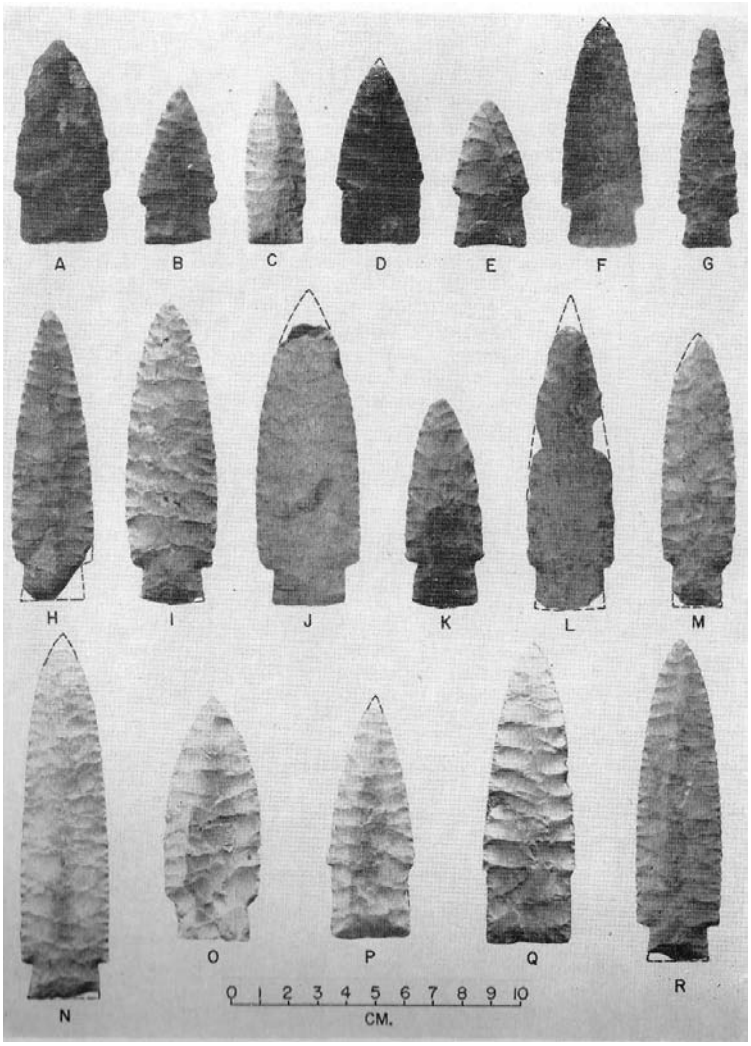


Scallorn points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:507).

Scottsbluff, Dart Point

Time Period: Paleo-Indian

Description: Triangular or leaf-shaped blade, edges are straight to convex. Shoulders are small but cut inward at a right angle. Stem is rectangular with smooth edges. Is not common in South Texas but has been found in Victoria County (Suhm et al. 1954:478, Hester 1980a:102).

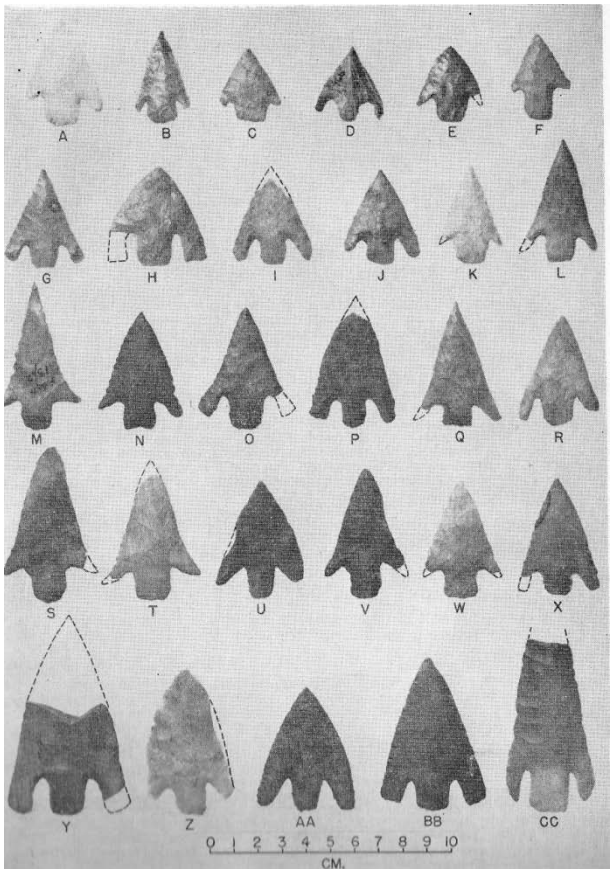


Scottsbluff points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:479)

Shumla, Dart Point

Time Period: Early Archaic

Description: Small triangular blades. "Almost always barbed from short to long, sweeping out laterally, or extending into line with stem base. Stem edges more or less parallel, may expand or contract somewhat" (Suhm et al. 1954:480). Usually made out of heat-treated chert giving points a pinkish color and a waxy or greasy feel (Hester 1980a:105).

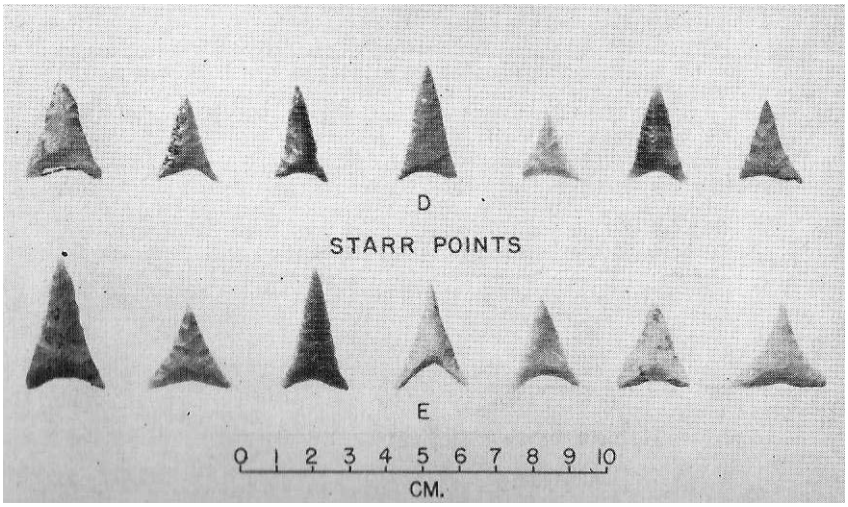


Shumla points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:481).

Starr, Arrow Point

Time Period: Late Prehistoric

Description: Simple triangular points with edges and base concave. Found in the Lower Rio Grande on both sides of the Rio Grande and extends along the coast near Baffin Bay. Sometimes present in Brownsville Complex sites (Suhm et al. 1954:506, Hester 1980a:107).

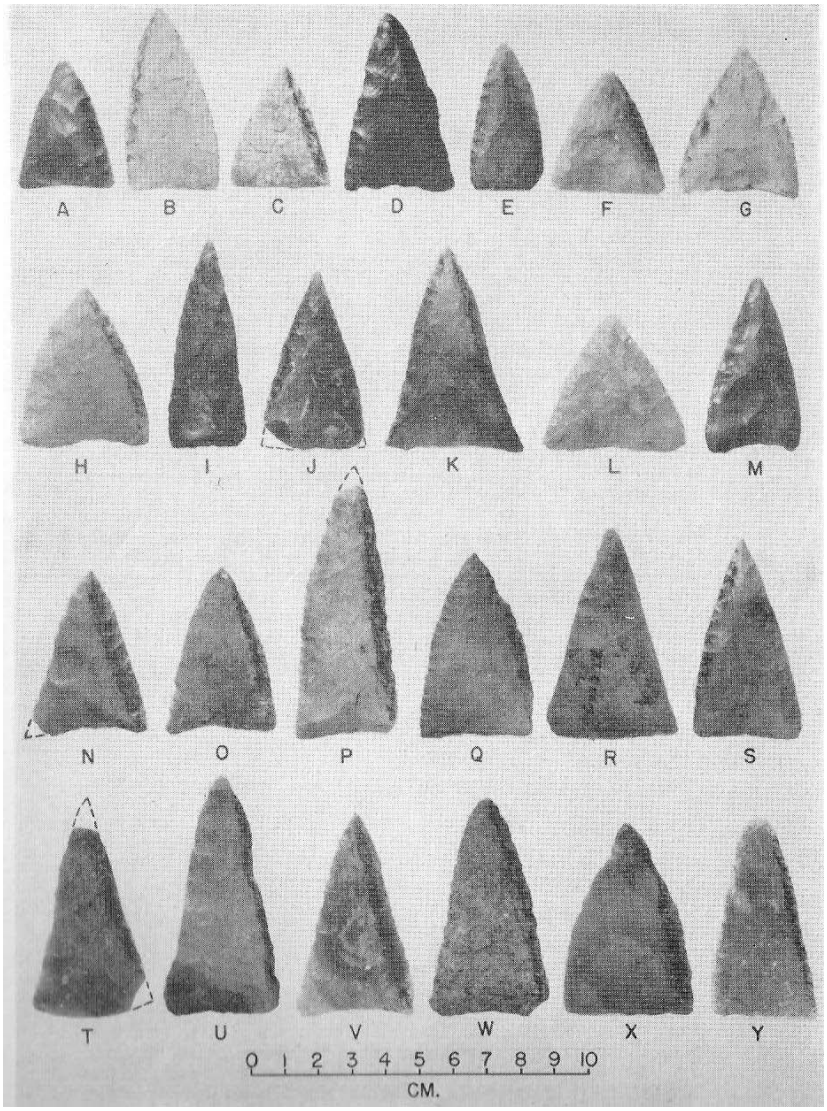


Starr points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:507).

Tortugas, Dart Point

Time Period: Archaic

Description: Large triangular blade with straight to convex edges. Bases straight to convex. Edges are usually beveled on right edge of both faces but sometimes left edges, or all four edges are beveled (Suhm et al. 1954:482).

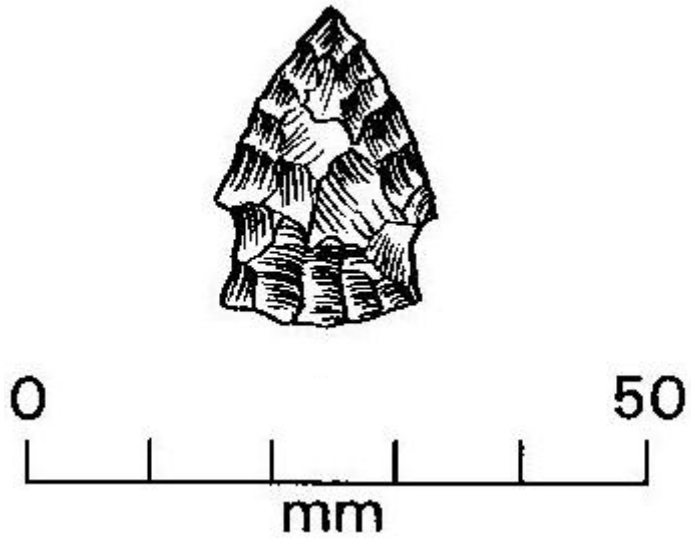


Tortugas points. (*Source* Suhm et al. 1954:482).

Zavala, Arrow Point

Time Period: Late Prehistoric

Description: Small, thick points that have an appearance of many dart points but date as late as AD 1650, are believed to have been arrow points (Hester 1980a:108).



Zavala point. (*Source*: Hester 1980a:107)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kristina Solis was born in McAllen, Texas on August 1, 1982, the daughter of Homero Jose Solis and Maria Minerva Solis. After graduating from South Texas High School for Health Professions in 2000, she entered Texas A&M-Kingsville as a pre-veterinary medicine major. In the fall of 2001, she attended the University of Texas at Austin where she received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Anthropological Archaeology in August 2004 with the honor of summa cum laude. Two years later she attended the University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, Texas. She will be receiving her Master of the Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in Anthropology in May 2009. She is currently a member of the Phi Kappa Phi and Lambda Alpha honor societies. In fall 2009, she will be working towards a Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

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