



TWO SITES IN UVALDE COUNTY

THE ELM CREEK SITE (41 UV 67) /Report No. 14
Wayne C. Young

THE COOK'S SLOUGH SITE (41 UV 68) /Report No. 15
(Antiquities Permit No. 97)
Clive J. Luke

Texas
State Department of Highways and Public Transportation
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THE COOKS SLOUGH SITE
UVALDE COUNTY, TEXAS

by

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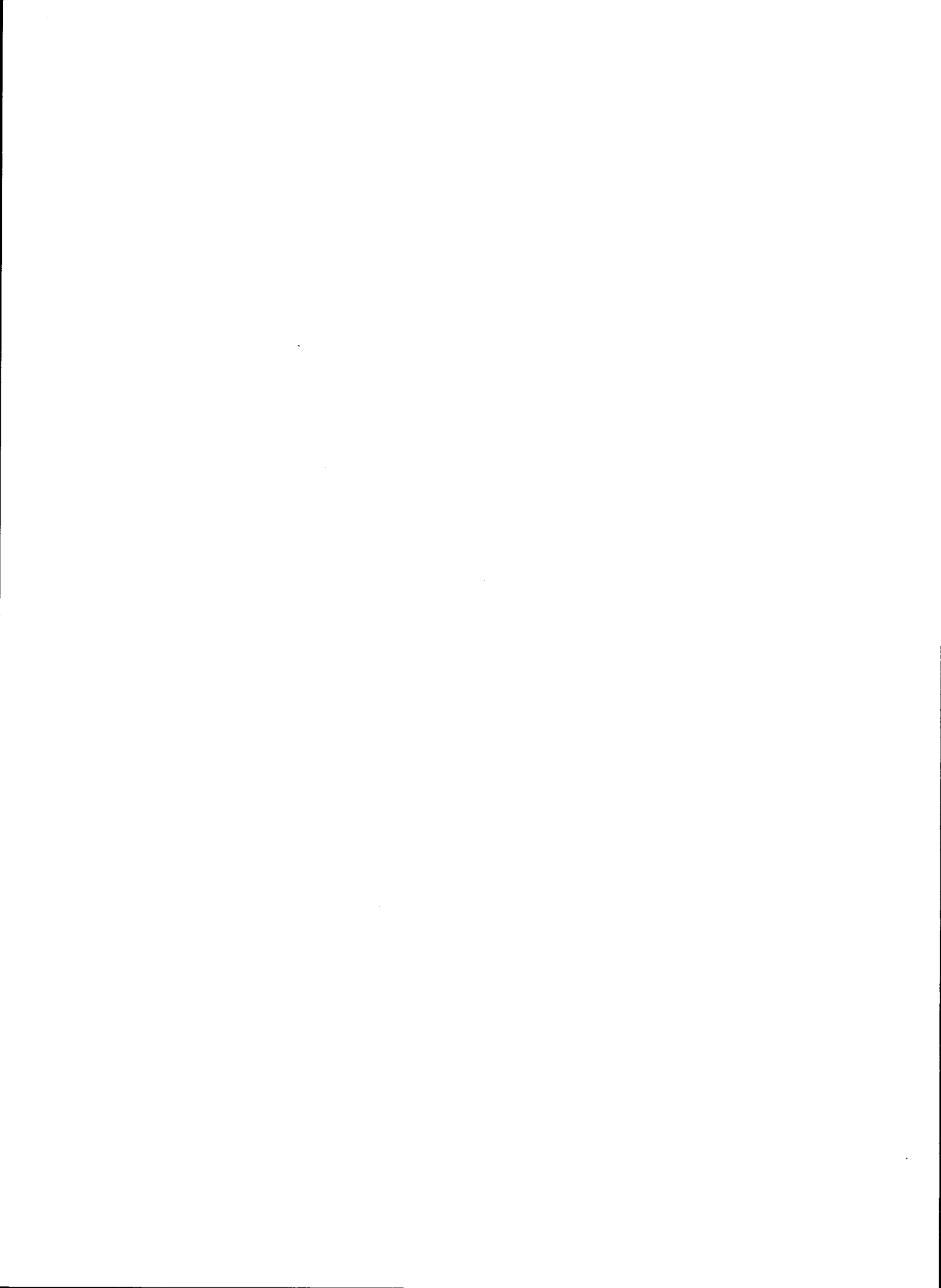
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Report No. 15

The following information is provided in accordance with General Rule of Practice and Procedure, 355.01.011c, Texas Antiquities Committee:

1. Test excavations of site 41 UV 68 on Cooks Slough near the northwest city limits of Uvalde, Texas.
2. F.M. 1435 Construction of F.M. 1435.
3. Uvalde County, Texas.
4. Frank A. Weir, Principal Investigator; John E. Keller, Project Archaeologist; Clive J. Luke, author.
5. State Department of Highways and Public Transportation, Austin, Texas.
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ABSTRACT

During the month of October 1975, a small prehistoric site, 41 UV 68, was subjected to an archaeological test. No archaeological features were located but a zone containing artifactual material of mixed temporal context was explored. The site appears to be a minor manifestation of prehistoric occupations in the Uvalde area.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The excavation of the site was facilitated by the cooperation of Mr. Ralph M. Baxter, resident engineer in Uvalde, Texas. Dr. John Esten Keller, formerly of the archaeology section of the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation, was the crew chief. He was assisted by Marshall R. Eiserer, also of the Department's archaeology section and several members of the Department in Uvalde participated in the excavation.

Joe Denton catalogued the artifacts and Milton Bell photographed them. Wayne Belyeu produced the necessary graphic illustrations while Beth Morris typed the finished manuscript.

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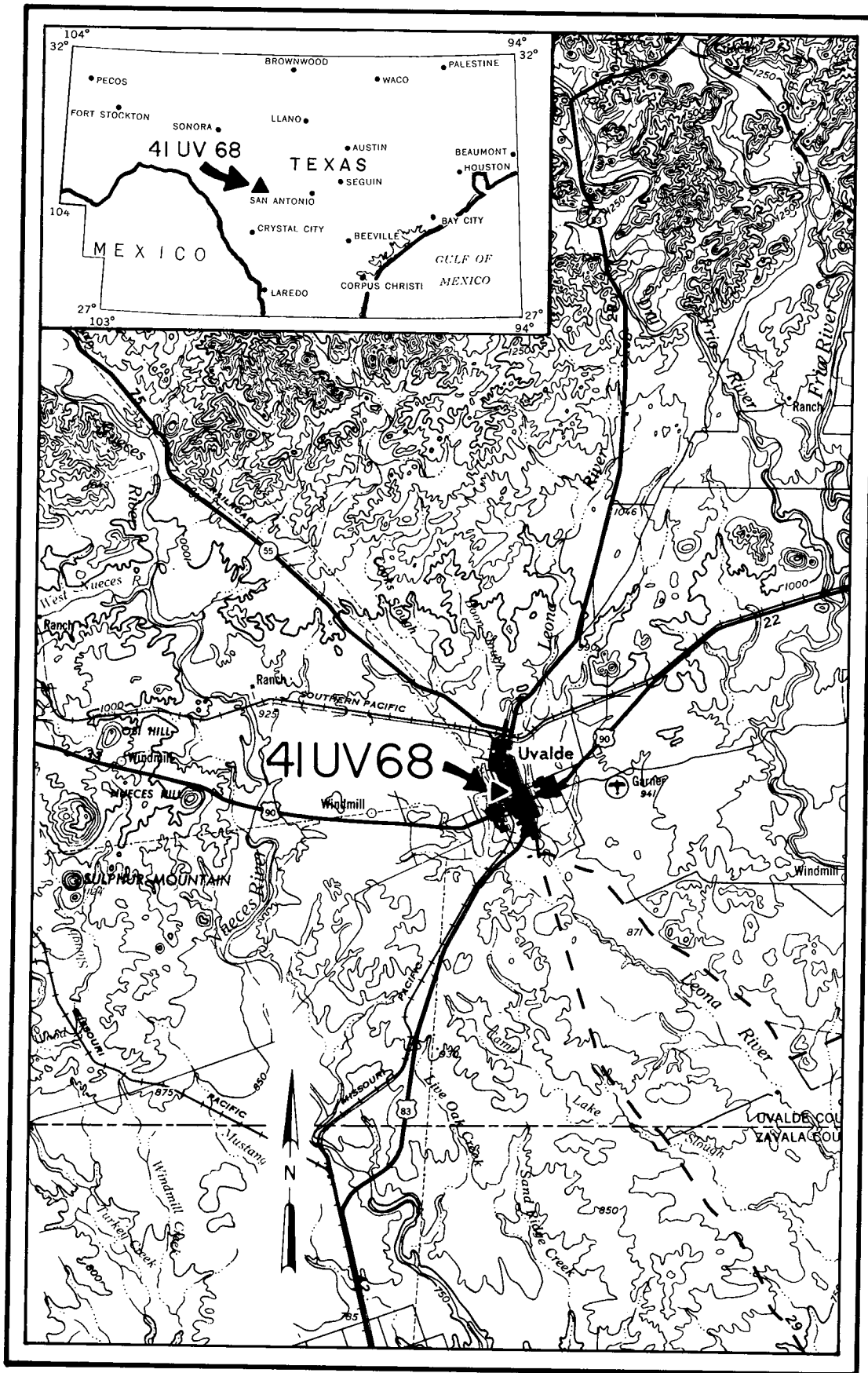


Figure 1. Location of Site 41 UV 68 in Uvalde County, Texas.

INTRODUCTION

Under Antiquities Permit No. 97, a small prehistoric site, 41 UV 68, was investigated during the month of October, 1975. The site was located on the east bank of Cooks Slough within the northwest city limits of Uvalde, Texas (Fig. 1). The planned construction of F.M. 1435 necessitated the investigation of the site in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation and the Texas Antiquities Committee, dated January 5, 1972, and under Senate Bill No. 58.

The exploration of the site occurred concurrently with the Department's excavation of the Anthon Site, 41 UV 60. The objectives of the exploration was to gather data for intersite comparisons and mitigation for highway construction. Besides the Department's unpublished Anthon Site, Hester's La Jita Site (Hester 1971) located in northern Uvalde County, was available for comparisons as well as an archaeological survey of the Leona River Water Shed (Hall 1974) which includes the city of Uvalde.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located on the Rio Grande Plain, a regional division of the Gulf Coastal Plain. The terrain of the plain is generally level and gently sloping and is underlain by soft limestones and marls. The site occurred on Mercedes Clay soil, a vertisol that exhibits a high shrink-swell coefficient (Stevens and Richmond 1976).

The site, 100 X 150 ft., prior to highway construction, was delimited to the east by fill from an old railroad bed and to the west and south by Cooks Slough which drains into the Leona River (Fig. 2). The site only slightly overlapped the proposed right-of-way. The area of densest cultural occupation was partially within a highway channel easement for Cooks Slough (Fig. 3); the remainder fell outside the right-of-way.

The excavator felt that the site had been deflated by sheet erosion (Fig. 4) because he could perceive no visually detectable stratigraphy separating distinct cultural zones (John Keller, personal communication); rather, the artifacts were contained within a zone of perhaps one foot to one and one-half feet thick (Fig. 5) and were considerably mixed. The high shrink-swell coefficient of the soil contributed most to the absence of stratigraphic separation and the churned nature of the cultural occupation. It is probable that the site never exhibited good cultural separation due to the apparent slow rate of deposition; neither would one suspect extreme sheet erosion because of the good ground cover at the site now and presumably in the past.

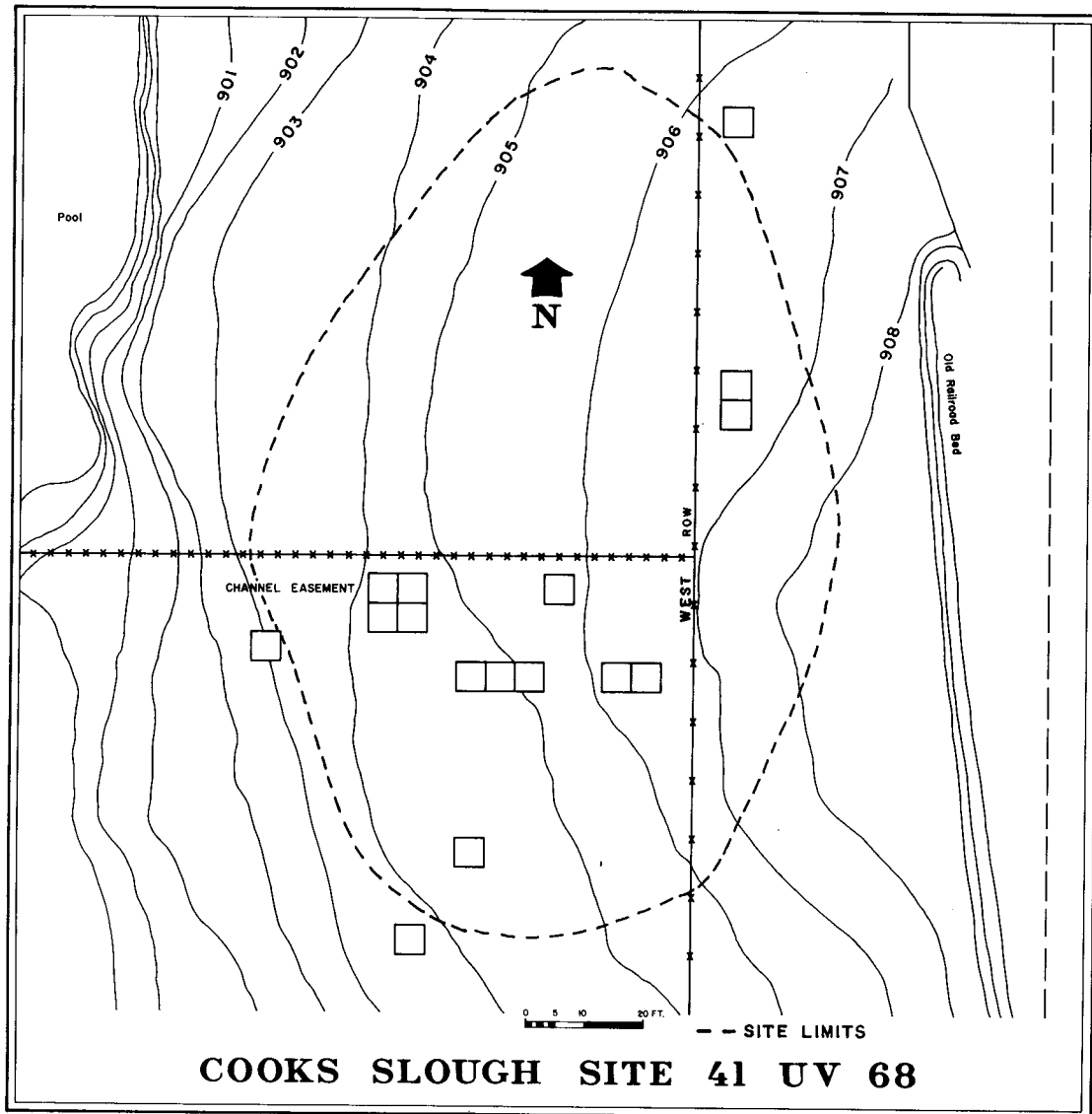


Figure 2. Site Map.

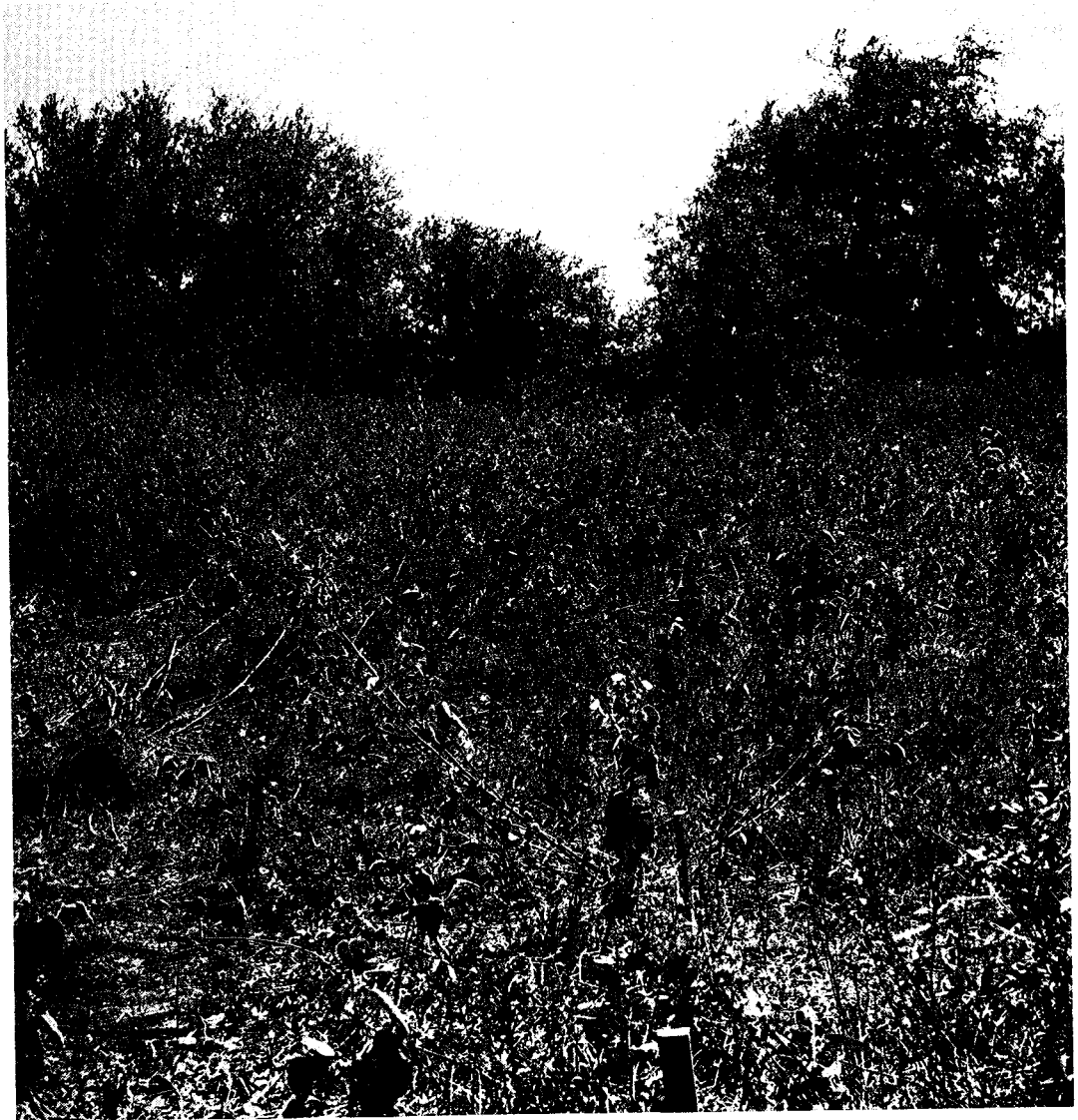


Figure 3. General view of site - Looking West.



Figure 4. The site looking North along the West right-of-way.

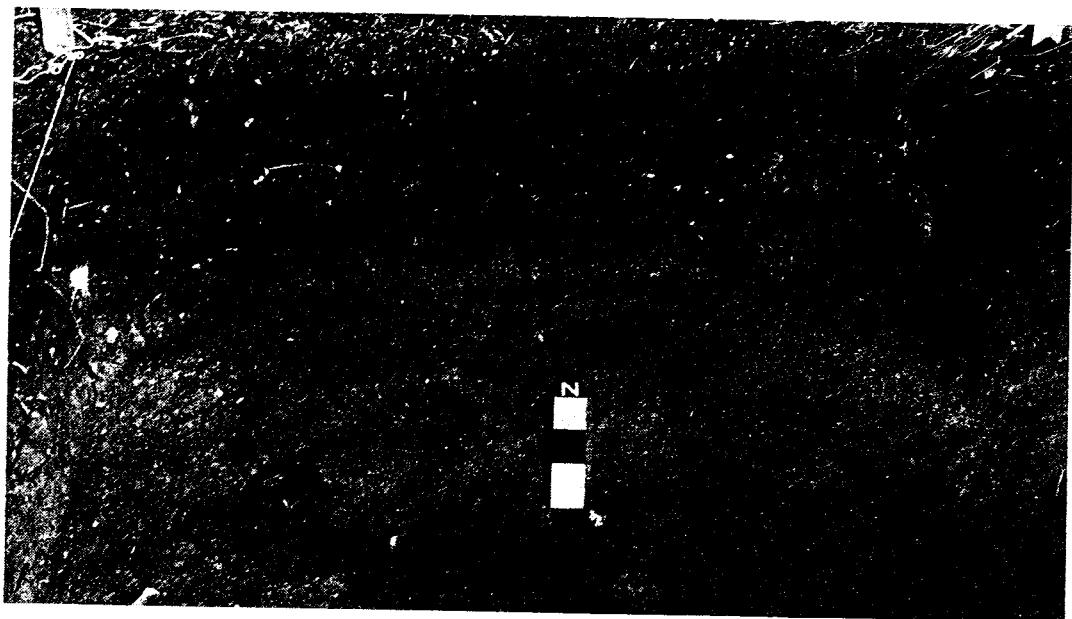


Figure 5. Typical Profile.

EXCAVATION PROCEDURES

Standard archaeological procedures were followed for the excavation. A 5-foot grid was employed for horizontal control and a contour map was made using plane table and alidade. Because the site had no well defined occupation zones and did not have a large number of artifacts, efforts were limited to thirteen 5 X 5-foot test units within the channel easement and three units within the right-of-way. All soil was passed through 1/4-inch hardware cloth. Each unit was excavated in 6-inch levels.

THE ARTIFACTS

No archaeological features were located; however, burned limestone rock, which may have been used in aboriginal hearths, was prevalent. The artifacts recovered were chipped stone tools or by-products of their manufacture. They may be classified as projectile points, other bifaces, unifaces, modified flakes, utilized flakes, detritus, and cores. No bone was recovered nor were ground or pecked stone tools found.

Projectile Points

Perdiz (1 specimen; Fig. 6A)

This arrowpoint specimen has a triangular blade with nearly straight edges. Stem is contracted and pointed at the base (Suhm and Jelks 1954:504).

Cliffton (1 specimen; Fig. 6B)

This arrowpoint specimen has a triangular blade with pronounced shoulders and a short stem. The workmanship is crude (Suhm and Jelks 1954:269; Hester 1971:76).

Ensor: Two varieties of *Ensor* dart points were identified.

Ensor Variety 1 (3 specimens; Fig. 6C-E)

These specimens have triangular blades, one specimen being alternately beveled. They have broad side notches and straight bases. The tip of one specimen is missing. These correspond to Hester's Variety 1 (1971:73).

Ensor Variety 2 (3 specimens: Fig. 6F-H)

These specimens have triangular blades, broad side notches and slightly concave bases. These correspond most closely with Hester's Variety 3 (Hester 1971:74). One specimen is complete, one is missing the tip, and the third is quite fragmentary (Suhm and Jelks 1954:442; Hester 1971:73-74).

Frio: Two varieties of *Frio* dart points were distinguished.

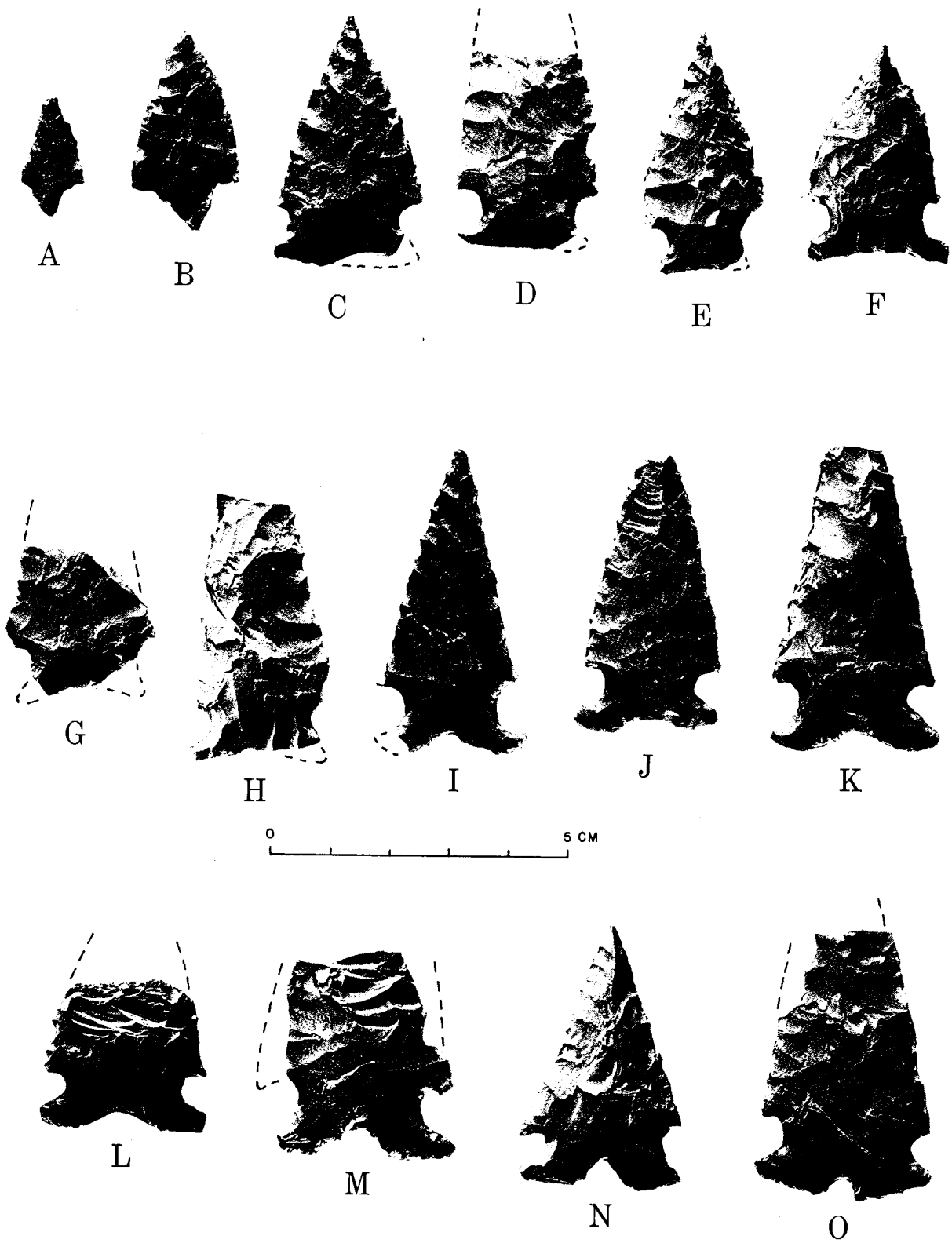


Figure 6. Projectile Points: A, *Perdiz*; B, *Cliffton*; C-E, *Ensor*, Type 1; F-H, *Ensor*, Type 2; I-L, *Frio*, Type 1; M-O, *Frio*, Type 2.

Frio Variety 1 (4 specimens, Fig. 6I-L)

These specimens have expanded stems with deeply concave bases and corner notches. The blade is triangular. These artifacts are similar to Hester's Miscellaneous Dart Point Form 2 (Hester 1971: 80).

Frio Variety 2 (3 specimens, Fig. 6M-O)

These specimens have triangular blades and have a distinct "U"-shaped notch chipped into the base. The stem is formed by corner notching (Suhm and Jelks 1954:428).

Montell (1 specimen, Fig. 7A)

This highly fragmentary, burned specimen retains enough of the base and shoulder of one side to suggest that the artifact is of the *Montell* dart point type (Suhm and Jelks 1954:452).

Pedernales (1 specimen, Fig. 7B)

This incomplete dart point has a rectangular stem with a deep "U"-shaped notch in the base. Both barbs are broken off as well as the distal end (Suhm and Jelks 1954:468).

Langtry (1 specimen, Fig. 7C)

This dart point specimen has a triangular blade with slightly concave sides and fairly prominent shoulders. The stem is long and contracting although its sides are slightly convex. The base is flat (Suhm and Jelks 1954:438).

Uvalde (1 specimen, Fig. 7D)

This specimen has a triangular blade with straight edges. Although part of the stem is missing, it seems to have flared outward with a concave base (Suhm and Jelks 1954:486).

Abasolo (1 specimen, Fig. 7E)

This specimen has a triangular blade with straight sides and a flat base. It is steeply chipped on both edges of one face (Suhm and Jelks 1954:400).

Miscellaneous Corner-Notched Points (2 specimens, Fig. 7F-G)

Two small dart points do not conveniently conform to established types. They both have corner notches and expanding stems, but one has a slightly concave base while the other has a slightly convex base.

Other Bifaces

Distal Fragments of Bifaces (5 specimens, Fig. 7H-K)

These artifacts have been thinned by percussion flaking.

Miscellaneous Thin Biface Fragments (5 specimens, Fig. 8A-D)

These 5 pieces of chert exhibit bifacial flaking, are thin, and are apparently proximal fragments of non-projectile point bifaces. Other than the above characteristics, these specimens have no common traits; bases range from straight to extremely convex. Sides may be straight, convex, or concave.

Thick Percussion Bifaces (11 specimens, Fig. 8E-G)

Of these artifacts six are broken. All but one (excluding a distal fragment) have a convex base and are roughly ovate in shape (if one may speak of shape when only half an artifact remains). Whether they were functional or discarded before finishing cannot be known.

Gouge (1 specimen, Fig. 9A)

This artifact is a subtriangular biface possessing a beveled end. A few flakes were removed from one face leaving the artifact roughly subtriangular in cross-section.

Unifaces

Unifaces are those artifacts that exhibit flaking on one face. They have been classified according to the number of edges so worked, further categorized according to which edge is worked in relation to the bulb of percussion, and finally subdivided according to the outline of the flake.

Unilaterally Trimmed Unifaces

Side-Trimmed (7 specimens, Fig. 9B-E)

These artifacts are generally flaked on the dorsal surface although two have been flaked on the ventral surface. Flake outlines range from subtriangular (4) to ovate (1) to nearly rectangular (2). The worked edge can be straight (2), convex (3), or concave (2). One specimen may be recognized as beaked uniface (Weir 1976:66).

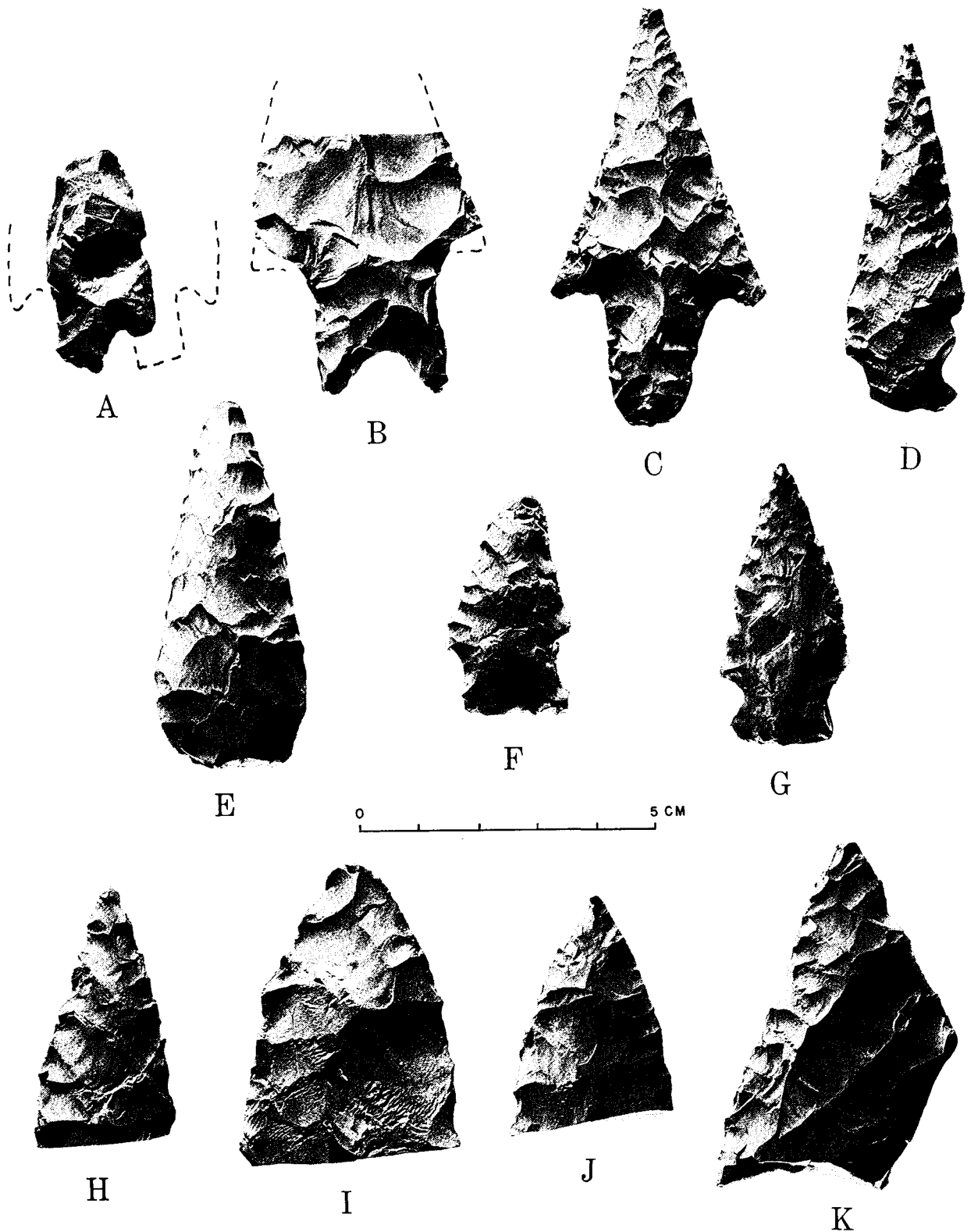


Figure 7. Dart Points and other Bifaces: A, *Montell* dart point; B, *Pedernales* dart point; C, *Langtry* dart point; D, *Uvalde* dart point; E, *Abasolo* dart point; F-G, Miscellaneous Thin Fragments; E-G, Thick Percussion Bifaces.

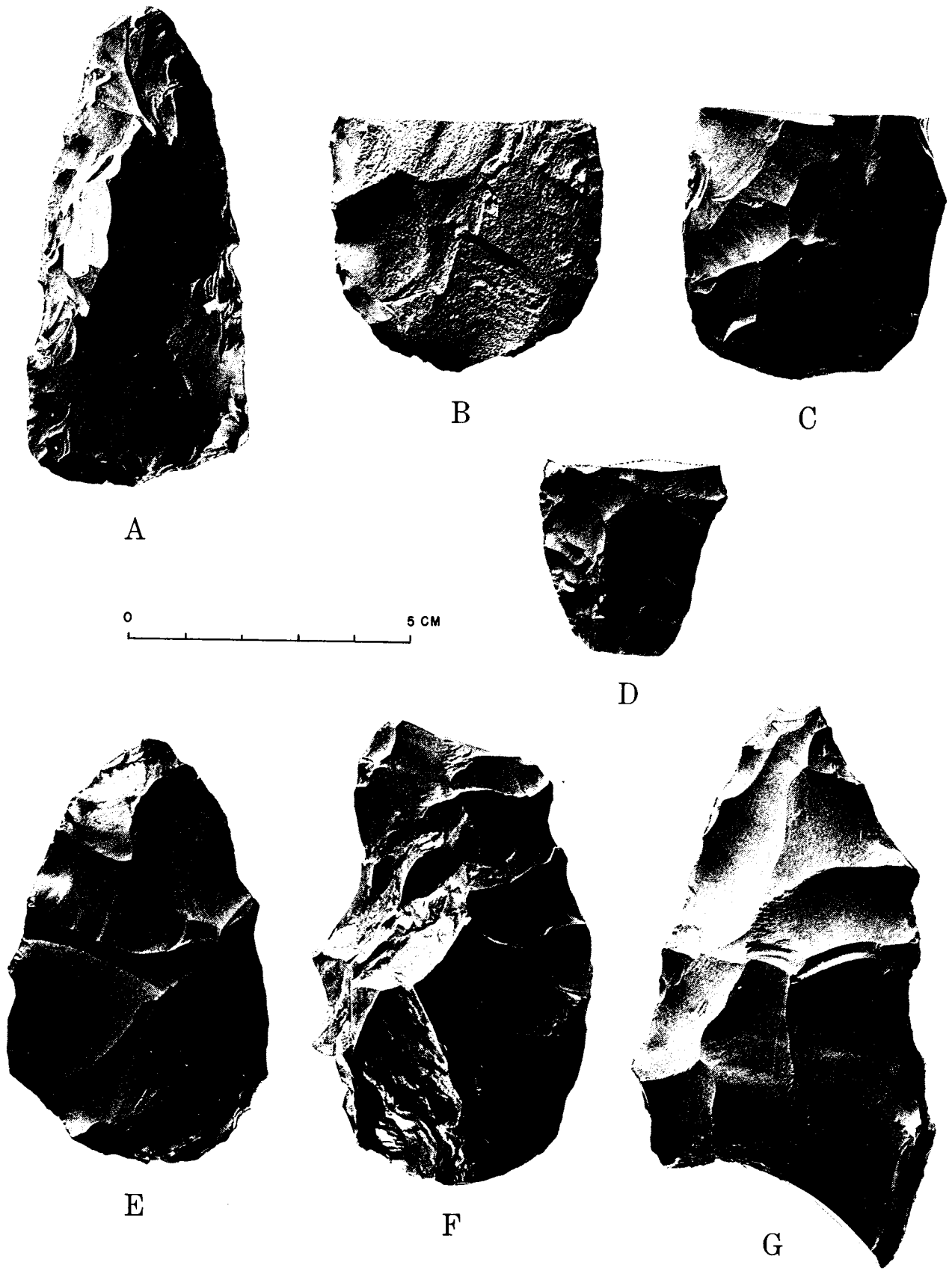


Figure 8. Bifaces: A-D, Miscellaneous Fragments.

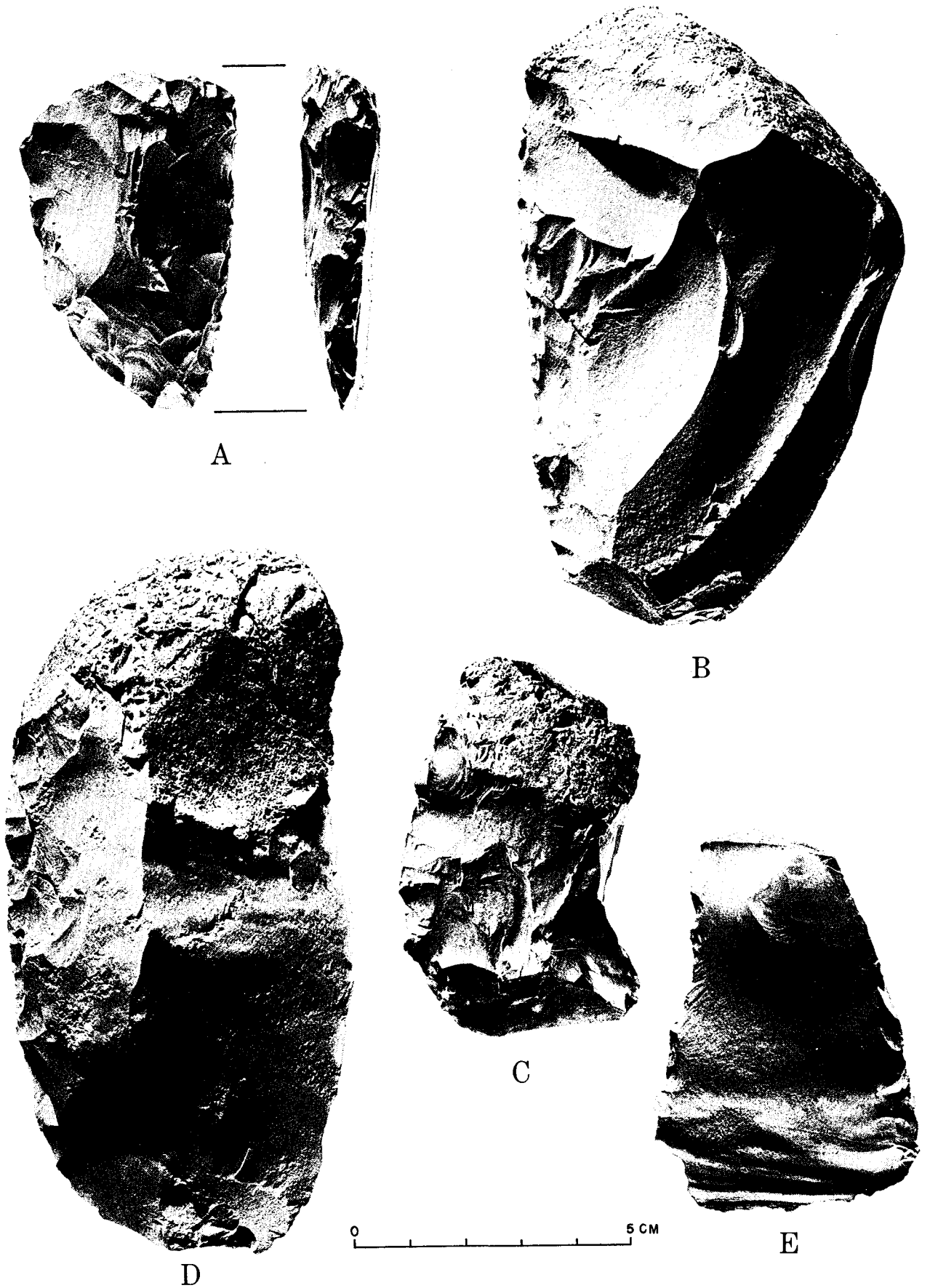


Figure 9. A, Gouge; B-E, Unifaces, side trimmed.

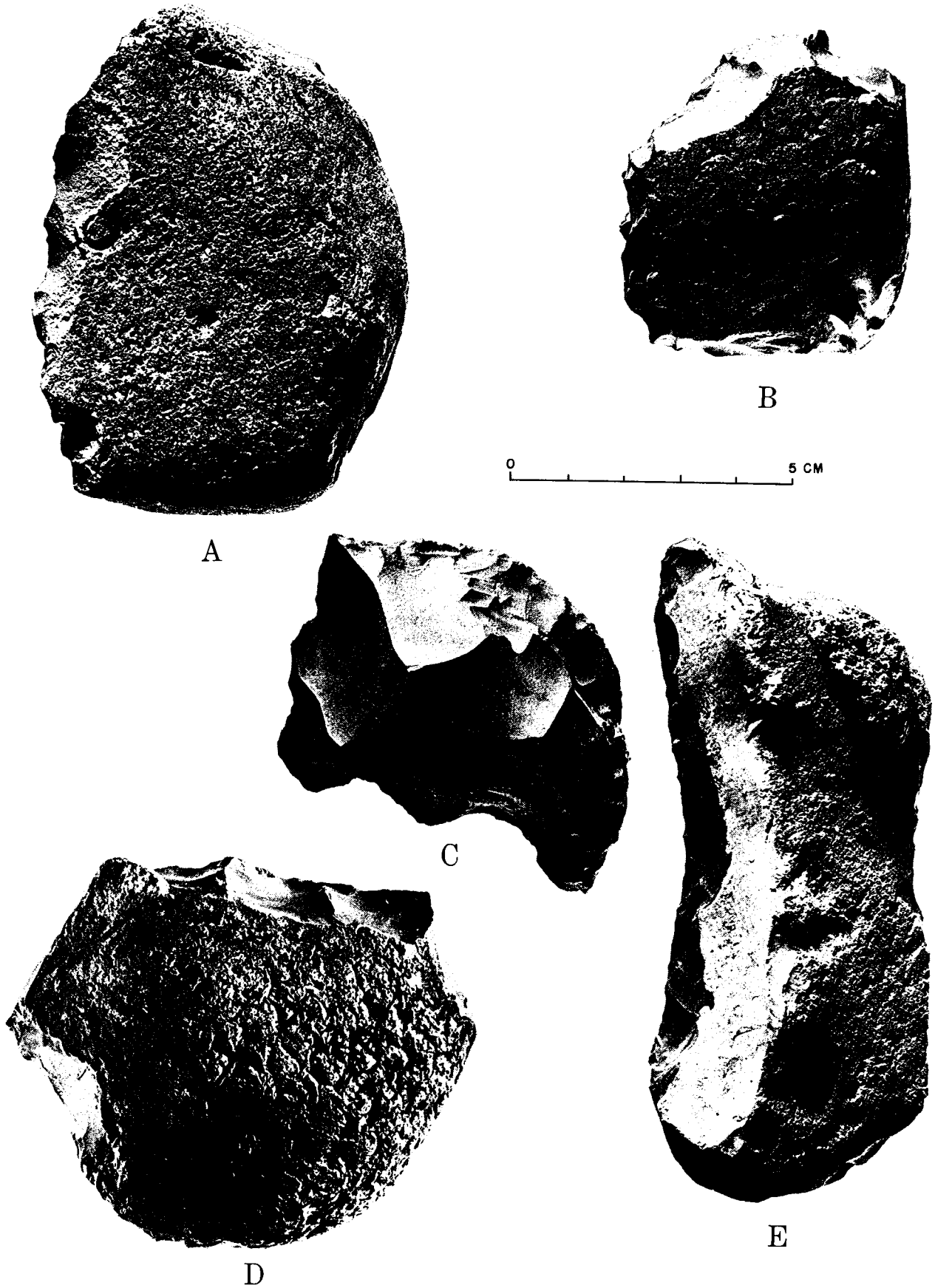


Figure 10. A-B, Unifaces, end trimmed; C-E, Unifaces, multiple edge trimmed.

End-Trimmed (9 specimens, Fig. 10A-B)

These artifacts are flaked only on the dorsal surface. The flake outlines range from subtriangular (3) to nearly square (4) to nearly circular (2). Four of these end-trimmed specimens are beaked unifaces. Of those five specimens not in the beaked uniface category, four have convex worked edges. The fifth has a slightly concave edge.

Multiple Edge-Trimmed Unifaces (6 specimens, Fig. 10C-E)

Of these unifaces, 2 are unilaterally end-trimmed, 3 are bilaterally trimmed, and 1 is bilaterally end-trimmed but might better be termed a "nosed" uniface (Weir 1976:66). One of the bilaterally trimmed specimens could be termed a strangulated uniface (Weir 1976:70). The flake outline varies from square (1) to rectangular (3) to nearly circular (2).

Most of the unifaces from the Cooks Slough Site are trimmed only on one edge, with end-trimmed unifaces being slightly prevalent over laterally trimmed specimens. Only 30% of the unifaces have been flaked on more than one edge. Subtriangular (7) and rectangular (6) shapes are the most common flake outlines followed by circular (4), square (3), and ovate (1). The majority of the artifacts were fashioned on secondary cortex flakes.

Utilized and Modified Flakes

Utilized flakes and modified flakes were also recorded (Table 1). Utilized flakes are those flakes that show the removal of tiny spalls as a result of utilization but which have not been purposefully altered. Modified flakes are those flakes from which a few flakes have been removed to better facilitate use but have not been trimmed to the degree that a unifacial tool has been. Unfortunately, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish a utilized flake from one which was stepped on, dropped, or struck in some way not related to any use.

Cores

A total of 50 cores and core fragments were found. These range from exhausted cores, *i.e.* Hester's core nuclei (Hester 1971), to cobbles from which only a few flakes have been removed. Several are ovate bifacial cores.

Provenience of the excavated flint artifacts is presented in Table 1. Those artifacts collected from the surface are not included in this tabulation.

TABLE 1
Subsurface Provenience of Flint Artifacts

Artifact	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
<i>Clifton</i>			1	1
<i>Perdis</i>		1		1
<i>Ensor 1</i>	1	1	1	3
<i>Ensor 2</i>	2		1	3
<i>Frio 1</i>		3	1	4
<i>Frio 2</i>	1	1		2
<i>Langtry</i>		1		1
<i>Montell</i>		1		1
<i>Perdermales</i>		1		1
<i>Uvalde</i>		1		1
<i>Abasolo</i>		1		1
Misc. Side Notched	1		1	2
Distal Fragments	1	3	1	5
Misc. Thin Fragments	3	1		4
Thick Percussion Bifaces	2	6		8
Gouge	1			1
Utilized Flakes	13	20	12	45
Modified Flakes	10	9	1	20
Unifaces	7	8	7	22
Cores	24	16	9	49
Grand Total				175

Flint Debitage

Because of the extreme degree of mixing, vertical provenience is meaningless at this site; however, some indication of vertical concentrations of debitage is seen. Units were selected for excavation on the basis of concentrations of cultural material.

The site excavation provided a total of 35.48 kg of flint which bore no evidence of use (Table 2). Depending on the excavation unit, gross weight frequently shows that flint was most common in the upper 6 inches; but frequently the second 6-inch level in particular units contained the greatest amount of flint. Rarely did the third level produce the greatest weight.

The material from a random selection of twelve lots were examined in order to suggest what types of flakes comprise the accumulated debris. Table 3 summarizes the results. The following divisions were used: initial cortex flakes, secondary cortex flakes, interior flakes, lipped flakes, and miscellaneous flint. The first four categories were adopted from Hester (1971: 106), but no distinction was made between simple and multi-faceted platforms. Miscellaneous flint includes broken flakes which exhibit no platform, random thermally fractured flint, and flint which did not lend itself to convenient categorization. Perhaps it is significant that the largest category is the miscellaneous flint.

CONCLUSIONS

The Cooks Slough Site (41 UV 68) was an unstratified terrace site on Cooks Slough. Because of its limited number of artifacts and lack of stratigraphy, intrasite analysis is of doubtful utility or validity, but some intersite comparisons can be made. The dart point types are the only artifacts available for either relative dating or intersite comparisons. Of the 22 projectile points, the 13 *Frio* and *Ensor* points are the dominant type.

The *Ensor*, *Frio*, and *Montell* dart points correspond to Hester's (1971) Late Archaic Period at the La Jita Site. He also includes fist axes, perforators, thinned bifaces, thick percussion bifaces, cores, scrapers, a miscellaneous chipped stone gorget, and a mano. Although the Cooks Slough Site does not have the above range of artifacts, those that are present fit well into that scheme. However, at the La Jita Site, *Pedernales* points are the most numerous type.

TABLE 2

Provenience of Flint Debitage

Unit	Weight In Grams	No. Flakes	Unit	Weight In Grams	No. Flakes
N450/E460			N505/E455		
Level 1	728	225	Level 1	749	107
Level 2	124	50	Level 2	1261	186
N465/E470			Level 3	892	226
Level 1	1324	343	N510/E450		
Level 2	381	97	Level 1	423	74
Level 3	82	38	Level 2		
N495/E470			Level 3	742	219
Level 1	1459	296	N510/E455		
N495/E475			Level 1	1444	623
Level 1	717	256	Level 2	3333	448
Level 2	869	332	Level 3	313	68
N495/E480			N510/E485		
Level 1	1145	326	Level 1	1058	186
Level 2	975	439	Level 2	1368	264
N495/E495			Level 3	437	158
Level 1	1191	146	N545/E515		
Level 2	1463	315	Level 1	1493	333
Level 3	127	32	Level 2	1427	555
N495/E500			Level 3	82	57
Level 1	1308	451	N550/E515		
Level 2	768	314	Level 1	1462	119
Level 3	230	98	Level 2	1322	282
N500/E435			N590/E515		
Level 1	19	2	Level 1	646	135
Level 2	896	410	Level 2	358	100
Level 3	640	155			
N505/E450					
Level 1	488	135			
Level 2	293	85			
Level 3	1442	248			
					8933 Total

TABLE 3

Frequencies of Flake Types

Provenience	Hard Hammer Percussion						Soft Hammer		Miscellaneous	
	Cortex		Secondary		Interior		Lipped			
	no.	wt.*	no.	wt.*	no.	wt.*	no.	wt.*	no.	wt.*
N450/E460 Level 1	8	182	6	46	133	3	25	11	356	155
N495/E470 Level 1	19	375	30	325	53	209	74	93	120	457
N495/E495 Level 1	3	229	12	548	24	115	17	12	90	287
Level 2	14	514	29	290	42	227	64	38	38	344
N500/E435 Level 1					1	14			1	5
Level 2	4	42	6	106	45	125	60	33	295	590
N495/E480 Level 1	9	270	7	102	3	212	87	82	185	481
N505/E455 Level 1	9	170	9	187	29	139	22	18	38	235
Level 2	7	256	22	433	30	260	31	29	96	283
N510/E485 Level 2	4	190	19	493	43	232	37	35	161	418
N545/E515 Level 1	7	207	12	235	79	395	82	47	150	619
N550/E515 Level 1	8	404	13	555	33	207	22	32	43	264
Preliminary Test Unit	1	17	1	25	16	206	3	4	6	92

* in grams

The artifacts from 41 UV 68, which include the *Ensor* and *Frio* types, are compatible with the Twin Sisters Phase of the Central Texas Archaic (Weir 1976). That phase as represented at the Anthon Site is also characterized by *Ensor* and *Frio* dart points although the Twin Sisters Phase is not represented only by *Ensor* and *Frio* in central Texas. Furthermore, the *Ensor* and *Frio* dart points also call to mind several sites in the Pecos River region of southwest Texas. The Arenosa Shelter, 41 VV 99 (Dibble 1967), and several sites recorded by Southern Methodist University in Crockett County, X41 CX8, X41 CX 3-A, X41 CX 7 (Lorrain 1968), are locations where large numbers of those point types were found in very late Archaic occupations. The primary assemblage from the Cooks Slough Site then demonstrates cultural affinities with sites in both central and southwest Texas.

The principal occupation of the Cooks Slough Site was clearly during the Twin Sisters Phase. Thus by analogy with other sites, a date of 2000 to 700 B.P. is estimated for that occupation. The other dart points suggest that the site was not unknown to earlier peoples although these older points could have been introduced to the site by Twin Sisters Phase or Late Prehistoric people. The two arrowpoints indicate some site use by Late Prehistoric inhabitants.

Although earlier reconnaissance by the Texas Archeological Survey did not indicate any sites of archaeological significance in the region where Cooks Slough runs through Uvalde (Hall 1974:8), the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation's brief excavation indicates that enough aboriginal material was found to reflect affinities with other sites and provide some additional data for some future settlement pattern study on at least one phase of the Texas Archaic. In that respect the excavation was successful.

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