

A PHASE I CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY OF THE PROPOSED CITY OF
KIRBYVILLE 2001 TCDP WATER PROJECT, JASPER COUNTY, TEXAS

by

William E. Moore

Brazos Valley Research Associates

Contract Report Number 104

2002

A PHASE I CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY OF THE PROPOSED CITY OF
KIRBYVILLE 2001 TCDP WATER PROJECT, JASPER COUNTY, TEXAS

BVRA Project Number 02-10

Principal Investigator

William E. Moore

Prepared by

Brazos Valley Research Associates
813 Beck Street
Bryan, Texas 77803

Prepared for

City of Kirbyville
107 South Elizabeth
Kirbyville, Texas 75956

ABSTRACT

A Phase I cultural resources investigation of a 9.8 acre tract in central Jasper County, Texas was performed by Brazos Valley Research Associates of Bryan, Texas in June 2002. No prehistoric archaeological sites were found to exist within the project area. The soil consisted of a shallow fine sandy loam over yellow clay containing iron nodules and pebbles. Overall, the 9.8 acre tract was determined to be a very low probability area for the occurrence of prehistoric sites. According to the landowner, several 19th century houses were once located to the north of the project area; however permission to examine this area was not granted. The only evidence of historic utilization observed in the project area was the remains of a fuel oil tank and a cooling tank. Archival research revealed the tanks were originally owned by the Magnolia Pipeline Company and were constructed in the late 1930s. Since no significant archaeological sites were found, it is recommended that construction be allowed to proceed as planned.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Brazos Valley Research Associates is appreciative of the assistance provided by the following individuals. The Honorable Dixon Conn, Jr., Mayor of Kirbyville was our liaison at the City, and the landowner, Paul Woods, provided on-site assistance. Pat G. Oates, P.E. of Goodwin-Lasiter, Inc. served as the Project Engineer for the project and supplied the survey crew with maps. The Principal Investigator is grateful to James E. Warren for his help with the shovel testing. Jean Hughes, Assistant Curator of Records, at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL), conducted the background check of the site records at TARL for previously recorded sites in and near the project area. The figures appearing in this report were prepared by Lili Lyddon of LL Technical Services in North Zulch, Texas. Mark H. Denton was the reviewer for this project.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
METHODS	7
RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS	8
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	9
REFERENCES CITED.....	10
APPENDIX I: SHOVEL TEST LOG	

FIGURES

Figure 1. General Location Map.....	2
Figure 2. Project Area Map	3
Figure 3. Project Area on Topographic Map Kirbyville	4

INTRODUCTION

An archaeological survey of a 9.8 acre tract within the city limits of Kirbyville, Texas (Figure 1) was performed by Brazos Valley Research Associates (BVRA) on June 5, 2002. The City is considering acquisition of the southwest corner of the 21.60 acre H. P. Woods tract for construction of a new water well (Figure 2). The actual ground disturbance or permanent easement will only affect an area about 300 feet in diameter. An unnamed tributary of Pin Oak Creek is approximately 100 meters southwest of the project area; the main channel of the creek is approximately 600 meters to the south. Although the tract examined is mainly open pasture, native stands of Chinese tallow trees were observed around the former petroleum storage tank sites and along fence lines. The terrain is generally flat with crawfish holes evident in the eastern section. The current project area is depicted on the 7.5' United States Geological Survey topographical map Kirbyville (Provisional Edition 1984 - map number 3093-323) (Figure 3). The project number assigned by BVRA is 02-10.

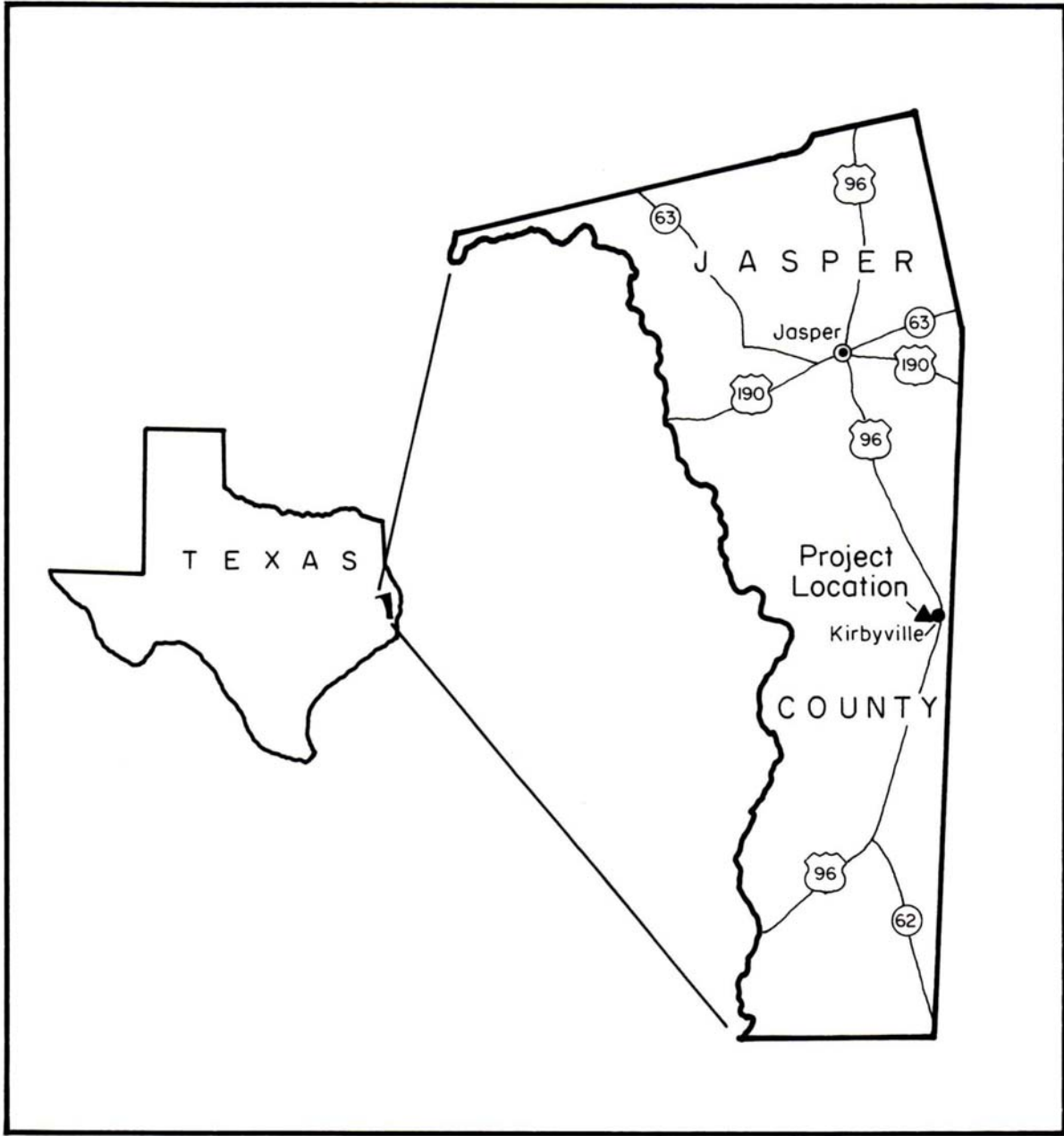


Figure 1. General Location Map

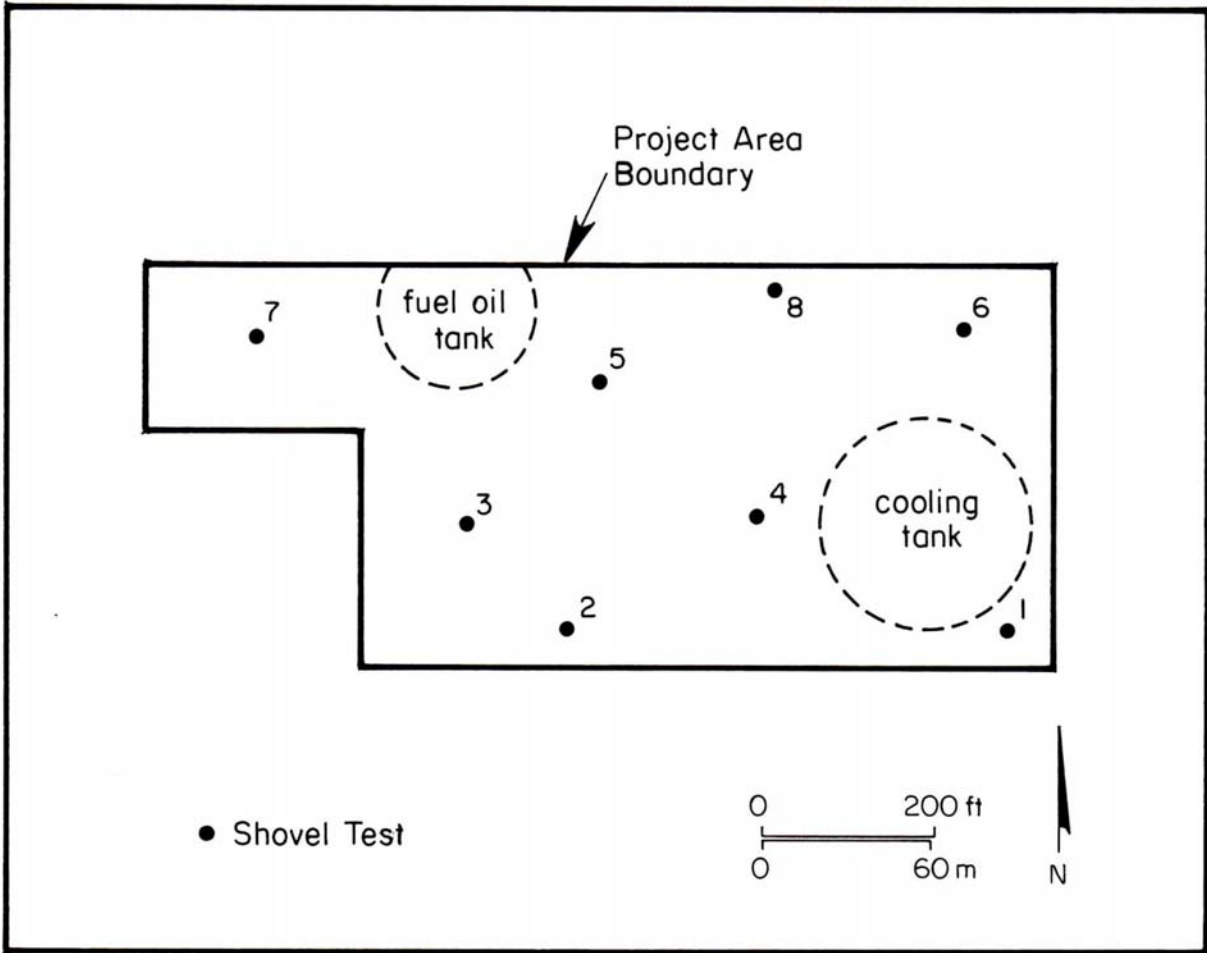


Figure 2. Project Area Map

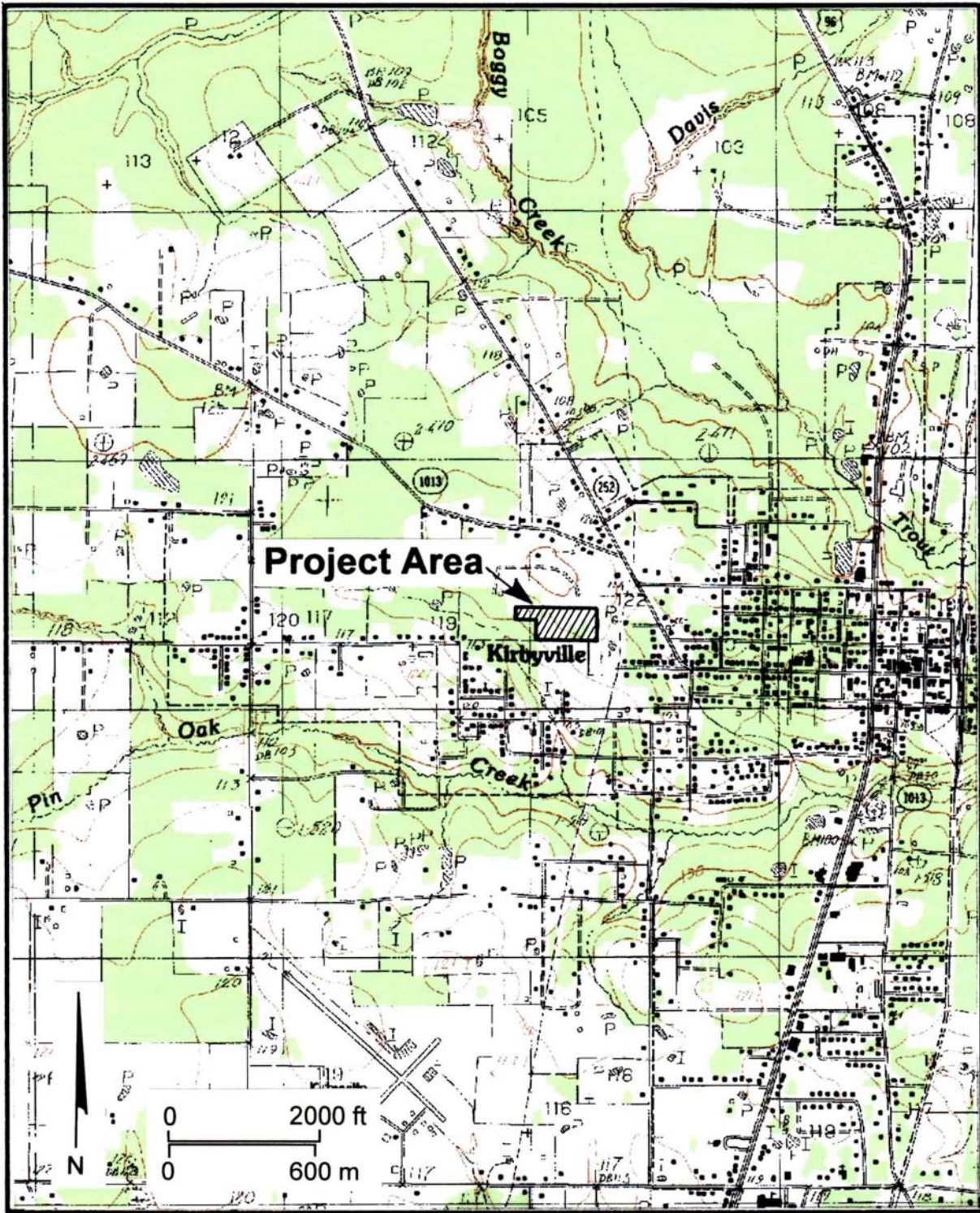


Figure 3. Project Area on Topographic Map Kirbyville

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

According to a recently published planning document for the Eastern Planning Region of Texas (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993:Figure 1.1.2), Jasper County is situated within the Southeast Texas archeological study region. In 1985, according to a statistical overview prepared by the Texas Historical Commission (Biesaart et al. 1985:151), Jasper County contained 86 recorded sites. The site files at TARL revealed 149 recorded sites at the time of this survey. In 1985, 0 sites in the county had been excavated, 10 had been tested by hand, 1 had been tested by machine, and 73 had been surface collected. Twenty-three recorded prehistoric sites in the county were listed as Archaic and 54 sites were listed as Late Prehistoric (Biesaart et al. 1985:151). One site contained burials.

In the volume by (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993:Figure 1.1.3) an evaluation was made regarding density of sites in Texas counties. At this time Jasper County was next to last with 0.001 - 0.1 sites per square mile. In 1993, Jasper County contained 99 recorded archaeological sites. Of this number, 27 were regarded as not significant, 62 were of unknown significance, 9 were probably significant, and 1 was considered to be significant according to National Register criteria (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993:Table 2.1.1).

Unfortunately, there are major forces that continue to threaten the integrity of archaeological sites in Jasper County. These include population growth (City of Jasper and surrounding area), highway construction, Sam Rayburn Reservoir (formerly McGee Bend), and the lumbering industry.

Although private contract archaeology firms have played a part, most of the archaeological sites known to exist in Jasper County have been identified by surveys associated with reservoir construction and in house projects by National Forest personnel. The earliest archaeological research in the area was performed in the late 1930s and early 1940s by researchers from The University of Texas at Austin. At that time prehistoric cemeteries and mound sites were considered to be of primary importance. From the late 1940s until the mid 1970s, most of the archaeological research in East Texas was carried out in connection with reservoir construction. In 1948, for example, Robert L. Stephenson published the results of his work at the proposed McGee Bend Reservoir in Angelina, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Sabine, and San Augustine counties (Stephenson 1948a, 1948b). At the time this was the only systematic professional major archaeological investigation in the county. Since that time several studies regarding reservoirs such as Dam "B" (Stephenson 1949), Big Cow Creek (Moir n.d.), and Rockland Lake (Prikryl (1987) have been published.

It is beyond the scope of this report to discuss in detail the archaeological background of Jasper County, especially when numerous contract reports are available. The interested reader is referred to the statistical overview (Biesaart et al. 1985), the planning document published by the Texas Historical Commission (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993), other reports cited above, and the *Abstracts in Contract Archaeology* series also published by the Texas Historical Commission for more detailed information regarding the archaeology of Jasper County.

METHODS

Prior to entering the field, a records check was conducted for BVRA by Jean Hughes, Assistant Curator of Records, at TARL. Ms. Hughes checked the site files for previously recorded sites in the project area. In addition, information pertaining to previous archaeological work in the region was obtained from the library at BVRA. The field survey crew relied on the topographic map Kirbyville and the soils book for Jasper County (Neitsch 1982). The method utilized to assess the 9.8 acres consisted of shovel tests and a surface inspection of exposed areas.

The field survey crew walked over the entire project area in approximate 30 meter intervals excavating shovel tests randomly along the way. In all, 8 tests were dug. All earth excavated through shovel testing was screened using 1/4" hardware cloth, and a shovel test log (Appendix I) was kept. Profiles of the shovel tests were sketched in the field, and the tests were drawn on a project area map (Figure 2). Unfortunately, some of the project area boundaries were not staked prior to this survey. The crew relied on the landowner, Paul Woods, for this information.

According to Mr. Woods, there used to be several standing structures to the north of the current project area. He pointed out a well that he claimed was hand-dug. According to the Mayor, we did not have permission to be on that tract of land as part of this project. The well was obscured by vegetation and trash placed there by the landowner to keep animals from falling in it. We observed the condition of the well while on our way to the project area.

Since the only historic structures in the project area consisted of earthen berms that previously enclosed a fuel oil tank and a compressor and a cooling pond, archival work was conducted to establish the chain of title for these features.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The records check at TARL revealed no previously recorded archaeological sites in the project area, and no significant archaeological sites were found during this investigation. The area surveyed consisted of "loamy soils of the flatwoods" as defined by the soil survey for Jasper County (Neitsch 1982:General Soil Map). The soils in the project area are defined by Neitsch (1982:Sheet 96) as the Malbis-Kirbyville association, gently undulating (MKB). These are deep loamy soils on uplands on broad areas that have a slightly mounded surface. The surface layer of these soils varies between 5 and 12 inches thick. Malbis soils are moderately well drained, and Kirbyville soils are somewhat poorly drained (Neitsch 1982:31). Shovel testing, however, revealed a different picture. Of the eight tests excavated, only one (ST 2) contained fine sandy loam to a depth of 20 cm where yellow clay with iron nodules and gravels was encountered (Appendix I). The remainder of the tests was terminated at an average depth of 10 cm.

The greatest impact to the landscape in the project area was observed in the form of the remains of a fuel oil tank for the storage of diesel fuel in the northwest section of the property and a cooling tank in the eastern section of the property (see Figure 2). The field examination found that the only evidence of the fuel oil tank remaining is the earthen berm. At the site of the cooling tank, however, a concrete foundation for an engine and compressor was found within the earthen berm at this location. Neither of the fuel tank areas was measured and is depicted not to scale in Figure 2. Since shovel tests in the immediate area of these tanks revealed soils more shallow than described in the soil survey, it is hypothesized that the soils used to construct the berms may have been taken from this area. In addition, a linear depression that was probably a water line (Dixon Conn, Jr., personal communication), and an undulating surface caused by plowing when the area was cultivated were noted. Archival research documented that the Magnolia Pipeline Company constructed the historic features in the late 1930s. According to the Mayor, the tank and the compressor were removed in 1955 following abandonment of the facility.

According to the landowner (personal communication, June 5, 2002), there were standing structures to the north of the 9.8 acre tract during the early 20th century, but they were moved many years ago. The only evidence of this historic occupation observed was a hand-dug well just outside the project area. No historic artifacts were found on the surface or in any of the shovel tests.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BVRA recommends that the City of Kirbyville be allowed to proceed with construction of the water well as planned. It is the opinion of BVRA that no significant archaeological sites were missed during the examination of the 9.8 acre tract. Should, however, cultural materials be exposed during construction, all work should cease until the situation can be evaluated by the Texas Historical Commission in consultation with the City of Kirbyville and Brazos Valley Research Associates.

REFERENCES CITED

- Biesaart, Lynne A., Wayne R. Roberson, and Lisa Clinton Spotts
1985 *Prehistoric Archeological Sites in Texas: A Statistical Overview*. Office of the State Archeologist, Special Report 28. Texas Historical Commission.
- Kenmotsu, Nancy Adele, and Timothy K. Perttula
1993 *Archeology in the Eastern Planning Region, Texas: A Planning Document*. Department of Antiquities Protection, Cultural Resource Management Report 3. Texas Historical Commission.
- Moir, Randall W.
n.d. *Evaluation of the Historic and Prehistoric Resources of the Big Cow Creek Reservoir*. Archaeology Research Program, Southern Methodist University.
- Neitsch, Conrad L.
1982 *Soil Survey of Jasper and Newton Counties, Texas*. United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service in Cooperation with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.
- Prikryl, Daniel J.
1987 An Appraisal of the Archeological Resources of the Proposed Rockland Lake. Report on file at the Galveston Corps of Engineers.
- Stephenson, Robert L.
1948a An Archaeological Survey of McGee Bend Reservoir: A Preliminary Report. *Bulletin of the Texas Archeological and Paleontological Society* 19:58-73

1948b Archeological Survey of McGee Bend Reservoir, Jasper, Sabine, San Augustine, Angelina, and Nacogdoches Counties, Texas: A Preliminary Report. Unpublished report on file at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory. Austin.

1949 Archeological Survey of Dam "B" Reservoir, Jasper and Tyler Counties, Texas: A Preliminary Report. Unpublished report on file at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory. Austin.

APPENDIX I: SHOVEL TEST LOG

Test	Depth	Description
01	10 cm	fine sandy loam over yellow clay with iron nodules and gravels; no cultural material.
02	20 cm	fine sandy loam over yellow clay with iron nodules and gravels; no cultural material.
03	10 cm	fine sandy loam over yellow clay with gravels; no cultural material.
04	10 cm	fine sandy loam over yellow clay with gravels; no cultural material.
05	10 cm	fine sandy loam over yellow clay; no cultural material
06	10 cm	fine sandy loam over yellow clay; no cultural material
07	10 cm	fine sandy loam over yellow clay with iron nodules and gravels; no cultural material.
08	10 cm	fine sandy loam over yellow clay with iron nodules and gravels; no cultural material.
