

ANTHONY & BROWN CONSULTING

ARCHAEOLOGY – CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**Archaeological Survey for Planned Improvements at
Oscar Perez Memorial Park, San Antonio,
Bexar County, Texas**



by

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**Archaeological Survey for Planned Improvements at
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Texas Antiquities Permit 3785
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ABSTRACT

At the request of the City of San Antonio, Parks and Recreation Department, Anthony & Brown Consulting conducted an archaeological survey for proposed improvements at Oscar Perez Memorial Park located in northwest San Antonio. The survey was conducted under Antiquities Permit 3785. Proposed improvements include football and baseball fields, two practice fields, a basketball court, a walking trail, a skate park, a pavilion and parking facilities. The survey consisted of a 100% pedestrian walkover of the approximate 10-acre park area with eight backhoe trenches and nine shovel tests to assess the possibility for buried, intact cultural remains. No cultural resource sites were recorded and clearance is recommended for all park improvements. Because no cultural remains were found, there are no artifacts to curate.

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INTRODUCTION

At the request of the City of San Antonio, Parks and Recreation Department, Anthony & Brown Consulting conducted an archaeological survey for proposed improvements at Oscar Perez Memorial Park in northwest San Antonio. The park is located at the intersection of Timber Path and Meadow Trace just southeast of the intersection of Culebra and Grissom Roads. Among the current planned improvements are football and baseball fields, two practice fields, a basketball court, a walking trail, a skate park, a pavilion and parking facilities. The location of Oscar Perez Memorial Park is shown in Figure 1.

Because the park is City of San Antonio property, it is subject to the provisions of the Texas Antiquities Code, now subsumed in Title 13, Part II of the Texas Administrative Code. This legislation defines the necessary conditions for recognition and preservation of State Archeological Landmarks (SALs) and requires that any political subdivision of the State of Texas, defined as a "local governmental entity created and operating under the laws of this state, including a city, county, school district, or special district created under the Texas Constitution, Article III, §52(b)(1) or (2), or Article XVI, §59" in 13 TAC §26.5 of the code, must identify potential SALs through survey of public lands prior to actions which could potentially damage those SALs. The code's provisions are administered by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) Division of Archeology. Archaeological survey requires a permit issued by the THC in accordance with the provisions of the code. The Oscar Perez Memorial Park improvements survey was conducted under Permit 3785, issued to Principal Investigator Dana Anthony.

The survey conducted by Anthony & Brown was designed to be in compliance with appropriate archaeological survey methods as defined in the Department of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines (National Park Service 1983), the survey standards developed by the THC in conjunction with the Council of Texas Archeologists (Texas Historical Commission n.d.), and the guidelines of the Council of Texas Archeologists (CTA 1987). The primary intent of the survey was to identify and describe any cultural resources located within the project area, evaluate the suitability of such resources for formal designation as SALs, should sites be located, and to make recommendations for future cultural resource management options such as avoidance, preservation, or further investigations if necessary.

The field work was conducted on 16 and 17 May 2005 by David Brown and James T. Jones who expended a total of 4 person days including travel.

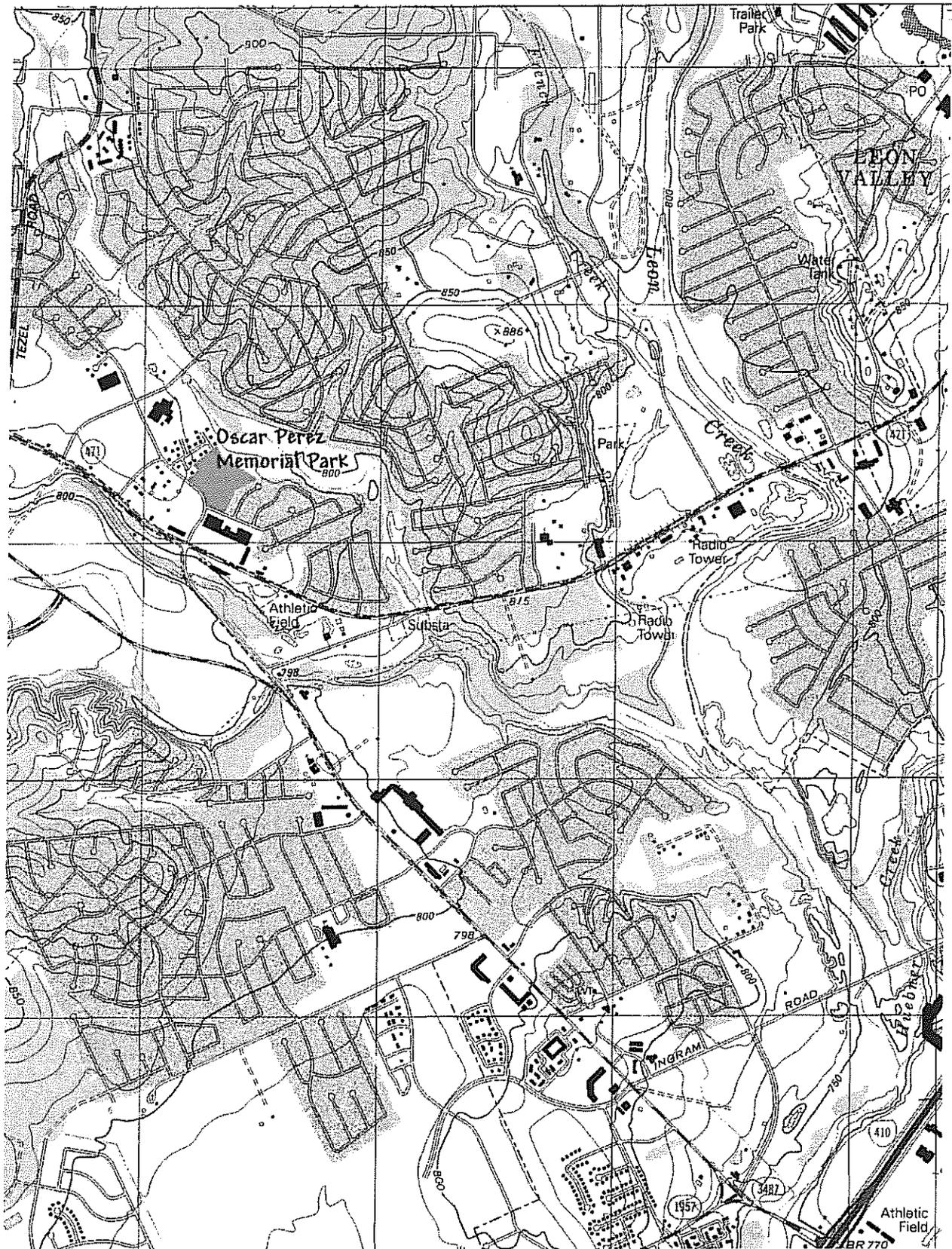


Figure 1. Project area location on USGS Culebra Hill quad, actual size.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project area is located in San Antonio, in west central Bexar County. The park lies between and about 1.2 kilometers northeast of the confluence of Culebra Creek and a small unnamed tributary that lies less than a hundred meters east of the park boundary. Culebra Creek itself drains into Leon Creek about 2.5 kilometers southeast of the project area. Leon Creek flows southward, joining the Medina River near Losoya. Except for the immediate area along the creeks, much of the area surrounding Oscar Perez Memorial Park has been developed for years. Figure 2 shows a section of the digital orthophoto quad in the immediate area around Oscar Perez Memorial Park.

Bexar County lies along the boundary between the Edwards Plateau section of Fenneman's (1931) Great Plains Physiographic province and the extreme northern edge of the West Gulf Coastal Plain section of the Coastal Plain physiographic province (Fenneman 1938). The Oscar Perez Memorial Park area lies below the highly dissected southern edge of the escarpment where a series of rivers flowing from the southern Edwards Plateau form fans or outwash plains of calcareous sediments derived from the Cretaceous limestones.

The climate of Bexar County is subtropical with mild, dry winters and hot, humid summers. Rainfall is fairly uniform throughout the year but heaviest rains fall in spring and early summer and the month of September (Taylor et al. 1966:118-121). Mean annual rainfall is 27.89 inches.



Figure 2. USGS Digital orthophoto image of Oscar Perez Memorial Park area.

The geology of the general area of San Antonio and Bexar County is quite complex but the sediments north of town trend from northeast to southwest, essentially following the Balcones Escarpment. Included here are the lower Cretaceous deposits, Glen Rose and Edwards, while traveling further southward the deposits are upper Cretaceous, Pecan Gap Chalk and Navarro Group and Marlbrook Marl ("upper Taylor Marl") undivided. Continuing south, recent Holocene sediments underlie much of the southern part of the city with lower Eocene deposits south of town extending onto the coastal plains (Barnes 1983).

The park area itself is mapped as being underlain by fluvial terrace deposits which are set into a broad band of Austin Chalk (Barnes 1983). The Austin Chalk is described as

Chalk and marl; chalk mostly microgranular calcite with minor foraminifera tests and Inoceramus prisms, averages about 85% calcium carbonate, ledge forming, grayish white to white; alternates with marl, bentonitic seams locally, recessive, medium gray, sparsely glauconitic, pyrite nodule in part weathered to limonite common, occasional beds with large-scale cross-stratification; locally highly fossiliferous; thickness 350-580 feet, thickens westward... (Barnes 1983).

The park lies near the boundary between a band of Lewisville-Houston Black, terrace, soil association that flows the upper courses of Culebra and Leon Creeks. The soils in this association are described as deep, calcareous clayey soils in old alluvium (Taylor et al. 1966). The association occurs where deposits of calcareous alluvium border the major streams and intermittent drainages and underlie old outwash plains. The lowest lying deposits adjacent to streams were washed out from surrounding uplands and are of recent geologic age. The thicker, higher deposits date to the Pleistocene epoch. Just south of the project area, the primary stream valley soils are mapped as belonging to the Venus-Frio-Trinity association. This association includes deep, calcareous soils on bottomlands and terraces.

The mapped soils series within the park is largely Lewisville silty clay, 0 to 1 percent slopes, with a small area of Lewisville silt clay, 1 to 3 percent slopes along the back edge of the park and an area of Patrick soils, 1 to 3 percent slopes, that may extend slightly into the front of the park (Taylor et al. 1966). The Lewisville series consists of very deep, well drained, moderately permeable soils that formed in ancient loamy and calcareous sediments (NRCS 2005). Taylor et al. (1966) indicate that Lewisville soils have a very dark grayish brown to brown silty clay surface layer that is about 24 inches thick. Immediately underlying this is a 20-inch thick layer of brown silty clay that is described as limy. Underlying this is a reddish-yellow calcareous silty clay that may overlie water-rounded limestone gravel. While the flatter variant of Lewisville silty clay occurs on broad terraces along rivers and creeks, the slightly steeper 1 to 3 percent slope variant is described as being found in narrow bands that separate nearly level terraces from soils on the uplands (Taylor et al. 1966: 25). These soils are classified as fine-silty, mixed, thermic Udic Calcicustolls (NRCS 2005).

Patrick soils consist of well drained, moderately permeable soils that formed in clayey over gravelly sediments on nearly level to strongly sloping ancient terraces of uplands (NRCS 2005). Although the NRCS description describes Patrick soils as moderately deep, Taylor et al. (1966:26) note that these soils are shallow locally with the deepest variant overlying gravel at only 21 inches. According to Taylor et al. (1966: 27), Patrick soils occur as narrow bands on terraces that are 3 to 30 feet above the present streambeds. The surface layer is 12 inches of clay loam, gravelly clay loam, silty clay, or light clay. This overlies 5 inches of calcareous brown clay loam, loam, or light clay. The substratum is stream-rounded, lime-coated, limestone gravel. Patrick soils are classified as clayey over sandy or sandy-skeletal, carbonatic, thermic Typic Calcicustolls (NRCS 2005).

The boundary between Blair's (1950) Balconian and Tamaulipan biotic provinces crosses northern Bexar County. The far northern portion of the county falls within the Balconian province that corresponds to the Edwards Plateau. Distinct in physiography and vegetation, the Edwards Plateau area has an aggregate vertebrate fauna but few endemic species (Blair 1950:112). The Balconian zone is more

akin to a broad ecotonal region between the adjacent Chihuahuan, Austroriparian, Kansan, and Tamaulipan provinces. Oscar Perez Memorial Park and most of the southern half of the county falls within Blair's Tamaulipan province. The semiarid, megathermal Tamaulipan Province has a distinctive vegetation marked by brushy species which disappear or decrease notably north of the province boundary. The fauna includes a number of grassland species that range east and northward into the Texan and Kansan provinces as well as species that are found in common with the adjacent Austroriparian and Chihuahuan provinces. The Tamaulipan is unique among the Texas provinces in having a Neotropical element. Many of these species are more prominent at the southernmost tip of Texas that Blair (1950) suggests might be included within his suggested Matamorán district.

Three vegetation zones are mapped within Bexar County (Hatch et al. 1990:2). These include, from north to south, Edwards Plateau, Blackland Prairie, and South Texas Plains. Oscar Perez Memorial Park lies within the Blackland Prairie portion, though presumably with considerable influence from the nearby Edwards Plateau flora. Today the park is largely grassland with scattered mesquites in the central area and larger mesquites, hackberries, retamas and a few oaks along the north and south margins as well as the drainage valley east of the park (Figure 3).



Figure 3. General view of park looking north.

The Blackland Prairie (Hatch et al. 1990:12) is a rolling and well-dissected prairie that represents the southern extent of the grassy plains that extend from Texas to Canada. The tallgrass prairie that once existed was dominated by little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardi*), indiagrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), tall dropseed (*Sporobolus asper* var. *asper*) and Silveus dropseed (*S. silveanus*). Common forbs include asters (*Aster* sp.), prairie bluet (*Hedyotis nigricans* var. *nigricans*), prairie-clover and late coneflower (*Rudbeckia serotina*). While grassland vegetation dominates upland areas, oak

(*Quercus* sp.), elm (*Ulmus* sp.), cottonwood (*Populus* sp.) and native pecan (*Carya illinoensis*) are common along drainages of the Blackland Prairie (Hatch et al. 1990:12).

Dominant tall grasses of the Edwards Plateau region include cane bluestem (*Bothriochloa barbinodis* var. *barbinodis*), big bluestem, indiagrass, little bluestem, and switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) with buffalograss (*Buchloe dactyloides*), sideoats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) and Texas grama (*B. rigidiseta*) now found on shallow xeric sites (Hatch et al. 1990:14). Woody species along drainages include live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), sand shin oak (*Q. havardii*), post oak (*Q. stellata*), mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), and juniper (*Juniperus* sp.).

The most common native arboreal species in the park today is the cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*) with hackberry (*Celtis laevigata*) close behind. Only a few small pecans are present in the park area today, though species endemic to adjacent regions such as huisache (*Acacia smallii*), retama (*Parkinsonia aculeata*), mesquite, and persimmon (*Diospyros texana*) are common, as are introduced species such as Arizona ash (*Fraxinus velutina*), chinaberry (*Melia azederach*), and ligustrum (*Ligustrum vulgare*).

CULTURAL SETTING

CULTURE HISTORY

Located a few miles south of the Balcones Escarpment that forms the southern boundary of the Edwards Plateau in this area, Oscar Perez Memorial Park lies along the border of two major cultural regions, the South Texas Plains and the Central Texas area. In addition, there was occasional influence from the Lower Pecos cultural region as well as from the coastal plain areas to the southeast. Though much remains to be learned from the archaeology of this broad region, a number of important studies have been to sort out the details of the prehistoric past in these areas. Building on early syntheses by Sayles (1935) and Suhm et al. (1954), more recent studies, including Black (1989b) and Hester (1995) for South Texas, Black (1989a), Johnson and Goode (1994), and Collins (1995) for Central Texas, and Turpin (1995) for the Lower Pecos region, have honed the culture history syntheses of these regions.

Also important to an understanding of culture history in the region are various studies of the paleoenvironment by archaeologists, geologists, and palynologists. These include studies by Bryant (1977), Bryant and Shafer (1977), Baker and Pentead-Orellana (1977), Hall (1982, 1990), Bryant and Holloway (1985), Holloway et al. (1987), Blum and Valastro (1992), Toomey et al. (1993), Nordt et al. (1994), Blum et al. (1994), Johnson and Goode (1994) and Ellis et al. (1995).

The culture history of South and Central Texas is generally divided into four stages, the Paleoindian, the Archaic, the Late Prehistoric and the Historic, originally defined by Suhm et al. (1954), but subsequently modified by numerous authors. In Central Texas, the long prehistoric period has been divided and redivided by many archaeologists, including early attempts by Kelley (1947), Johnson (1967), and Weir (1976). One of the most finely subdivided and most widely utilized chronological schemes of recent years was put forth by Prewitt (1981, 1983) whose work was built upon the earlier syntheses. Prewitt's scheme was subsequently criticized for problems with terminology, dating and the primary association of type artifacts by Black and McGraw (1985), Johnson (1986), and Black (1989a) among others. Some of the most recent Central Texas chronological schemes, such as Johnson and Goode (1994) and Collins (1995), have sought to avoid these pitfalls. In South Texas, on the other hand, numerous authors have sought to define phases or finer subdivisions of the prehistoric record but few have been widely accepted and the original four part chronological division, with a tripartite subdivision of the Archaic into Early, Middle and Late, is still the most widely accepted.

The Paleoindian stage originally included the earliest inhabitants of the New World who spread across the American continent in the waning years of the Pleistocene era. Recent pre-Clovis finds, such as the site of Monte Verde in southern Chile (Dillehay 1989), have significantly altered the chronology of New World occupation. Evidence for such early cultures has not been forthcoming in Central Texas, however (see discussion in Collins 1995: 380-381).

Paleoindian cultures are typically identified by their distinctive lithic technology, including well-made projectile points such as *Clovis*, *Folsom*, *Plainview* and a wide range of related lanceolate forms. Primary site types include open sites and rockshelters, with evidence of general occupation as well as specialized activities such as stone tool making, hunting and game processing. Stone artifact caches and human burials have also been found which date to the Paleoindian era. In the past, the Paleoindian peoples have been typically characterized as a nomadic big-game hunting culture, but considerable recent evidence suggests a much broader range of subsistence activities within a rich and complex cultural tradition.

Overall, the Paleoindian era is one that is marked by a gradual warming trend at the close of the final Pleistocene Wisconsinian glaciation. This warming trend is associated with a dramatically shifting faunal and floral environment, to which the various cultural traditions quickly adapted. Sites of the earliest Clovis

peoples, dated between 11,200 and 10,900 BP (Haynes 1992, cited in Collins 1995), include remains of many now-extinct Pleistocene megafauna, including, camel, giant sloth, mammoth and mastodon, as well as numerous smaller species. In spite of the megafaunal associations, the Clovis economy seems to have been more diverse than previously thought. Subsequent Folsom peoples, on the other hand, were more devoted to big-game hunting pursuits; numerous Folsom sites are associated with the remains of the extinct bison: *Bison antiquus*. The later Paleoindian period, characterized by a number of lanceolate point types, also represents a diverse subsistence adaptation, but one that maximizes exploitation of modern bison, *B. bison*.

The earliest Archaic stage cultures, now dated as beginning between about 9,000 to 8,000 BP in the adjacent cultural regions, are distinguished from the previous Paleoindian stage by a hypothesized broadening of the subsistence base as well as increasingly regionalized stone tool stylistic traditions (although certain general style traits are widely spread during the earliest subperiods). Site types include both rock shelters and open sites. In addition to generalized campsites that contain artifacts representing a wide range of activities, there are numerous specialized site types, including quarry sites, lithic production sites, rock oven sites, and cemeteries.

The Archaic stage has been divided and subdivided many times and the final configuration is far from written. Most classificatory schemes use a basic tripartite Early, Middle and Late division which is then subdivided into smaller phases, periods, patterns, or intervals. The Early Archaic, marked by a proliferation of new projectile point styles, the earliest of which resemble Paleoindian lanceolate points in style and technology, and diagnostic tools such as Guadalupe gouges and grinding stones which may reflect the wider range of subsistence activities hypothesized for this period. This period is marked by a notably warmer and drier climate than the Late Pleistocene. Bison are absent from Central and South Texas at this time though bison exploitation continued apparently unabated on the southern High Plains. Subsistence pursuits were generalized throughout the southern and eastern margins of the area.

The Early Archaic has traditionally been defined as a transitional post-Paleoindian period in all three regions, dated by the disappearance of the bison from the region and the rise of more generalized economies. The cultural characteristics and dating of the Middle Archaic have been less certain, however, and interpretation and dating of the period have changed substantially over the years. In Central Texas, Prewitt's (1983) Middle Archaic is now generally included in the Late Archaic while the latter phases of his Early Archaic chronology are included by Johnson and Goode (1994) and Collins (1995) as Middle Archaic. Johnson and Goode (1994) date this period to a brief 1300 years beginning roughly 5500 BP. Hester (1995: 438) begins the South Texas Middle Archaic somewhat closer to the more traditional date of 4500 BP.

Debate over climate change and its significance has affected the definition of this period. On the southern plains, Johnson and Holliday (1995) have associated the High Plains Middle Archaic directly with the Altithermal which they date to between 6500 and 4500 BP. In the most recent interpretations of Central Texas prehistory, the earliest part of the Middle Archaic period, dated around 6000 BP, seems to reflect a brief shift to a cooler and more mesic climate, marked by the reappearance of bison. Some of the cultural traits from this early period may have been introduced from other regions, through movement of peoples or wider trade networks. Not long after, though, the Altithermal comes to Central Texas and one of the driest periods of the Holocene ensues. Bison are absent from Central Texas and the Lower Pecos during this late subperiod. Overall, the latter part of the Middle Archaic seems to be marked by increasingly specialized regional economies and stylistic traditions. At this time, a unique site type, the burned rock midden, the remains of superimposed subterranean rock ovens and oven debris, appears throughout the central and southern portions of the region.

The recently expanded Central Texas Late Archaic is divided into two subperiods by Johnson and Goode (1994) who place the first half, the Late Archaic I, coeval with their drier Edwards Interval paleoclimate. This early Late Archaic period is marked by the explosion in burned rock midden sites, while

near the end of the period, bison once again make their appearance. A population increase and possibly increasing social complexity have been postulated for what is now the early part of the Late Archaic period (Weir 1976). A return to slightly more mesic conditions may characterize the later Late Archaic of Central Texas, though there is no general concurrence on this (see comment in Johnson and Goode 1994:36-37). Bison are absent from Central Texas during at least part of this period.

Toward the end of the Archaic, population densities may have increased and connections may have been established between the hunter-gatherers of South and Central Texas and the complex cultures developing in surrounding regions. Large burial sites in some parts of south central and coastal Texas during the Late Archaic may indicate intensive reoccupation of certain sites or, possibly, increasing sedentism of the cultural groups. A proliferation of projectile point types during this latter period suggests increasingly differentiated regional cultures. During this period, Plains village cultures and ceramics make their first appearance on the high plains.

The final prehistoric period of Central and South Texas, the Late Prehistoric, is marked by the introduction of new technologies, including the bow and arrow and ceramics, as well as potentially new adaptive strategies. Site types are varied including open campsites, lithic scatters, and cemeteries. The earliest part of this period, the Austin interval, beginning about 1200 to 1300 BP, reflects a certain degree of cultural and economic continuity underlying the adoption of new technologies while the latter Toyah interval, extending roughly to the beginning of the historic period, may indicate the introduction of immigrants following a southward extension of the range of the bison.

Texas history begins with the arrival of the first Europeans, including possibly the expeditions sent by Francisco Garay, then governor of Jamaica, to the mouth of the Rio Grande between 1519 and 1523. The most famous early visitors, however, were Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca and the ill-fated survivors of the Narvaez expedition on the Texas coast in 1528. Little more than a decade after Cabeza de Vaca was shipwrecked on the Texas coast, Coronado and his expeditionary army were marching across West Texas and the southern Plains. The influences of European colonization were not felt strongly in the Central Texas region for several centuries, however.

While Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, the first European known to have visited Texas, may have traveled to the San Antonio area, the first documented European visit was by Spanish expeditions exploring the area in the late 1600s. These expeditions, concerned about the threat of French incursions on Spanish territory, settled missionaries and soldiers in East Texas in 1690. The San Antonio River, the Medina River, San Pedro Creek, and many other local natural landmarks were first named by these early explorers. These explorers noted several native American groups living in what is today Bexar County and the surrounding region.

Little is known of the fate of the prehistoric inhabitants of South Texas during the historic era. Though a number of small groups have been documented in the early historic period of south, south central and coastal Texas, most disappeared very quickly from the written records. And little documentation exists for much of Central Texas during this early era. Puebloan and Southern Plains groups seem to have made early incursions into extreme northwestern Central Texas while Caddoan artifacts in various sites of the central and eastern margin attest to that group's presence in Central Texas. Along the eastern margins of Central Texas, plains groups like the Tonkawa and Wichita lived in villages along major streams; some of these groups probably ventured westward on seasonal bison hunts. In South Texas, Campbell (1988) has documented the available evidence on the Coahuiltecan bands that roamed this region.

The Apaches, one of the better-known Native American historic tribes in the region, were relative latecomers to Texas. This Athapaskan-speaking group appears to have migrated from Canada during the middle of the second millennium AD. While several Apachean groups have been identified with far West

Texas, the Lipan Apaches are known to have ventured into Central and South Texas as early as the seventeenth century. By the eighteenth century, the Comanche, a Shoshonian-speaking group, appeared in Central Texas, migrating south. The Comanche were mounted hunters and raiders from the northern Plains, feared by Europeans and Apaches alike. When the Comanche first appeared in Central Texas, the Apache sought shelter in Spanish missions (Richardson et al. 1981: 30-31). The conflict between Apache, Comanche, and Spanish raged for decades.

With increasing Anglo settlement of the South Texas area in the early to mid nineteenth century, and antagonistic official policies, as well as continuous onslaughts of epidemic diseases, Native American populations began to dwindle. While the Comanche and a few other groups were able to maintain some social cohesion, other groups were eliminated or lost their individual identities as the survivors merged with isolated survivors from other bands. Remnants of bands from the Plains and from across the continent, including Kickapoo, Seminole, and others, ranged across the state seeking refuge from annihilation.

The initial settlement of the San Antonio area was undertaken around 1718 with the founding of the San Antonio de Valero mission (today's Alamo) along the east bank of the San Antonio River and the Presidio de Bexar and the nearby civil settlement of the Villa de Bexar on the opposite bank. The first attempts at building canals to transport water from the San Antonio River to the fledgling settlements were undertaken at this time. Cox (1999:319) indicates that the Alamo Acequia was begun shortly after 1719, while Noonan (1987:18) suggests that it was begun as late as 1724. Cox (1999:319) notes that Fray Miguel Sevillano de Paredes, who visited San Antonio de Valero, reported that the Alamo Acequia, which brought water to the mission as well as to its agricultural fields, was still under construction as late as 1727. When first built, this acequia was approximately 3.5 miles in length; additional channels and laterals to farm lands extended the system to nearly 10 miles (Cox 1999:319).

In the 1730s, the troubled East Texas missions originally founded in the late seventeenth century to protect Spain's claim to its frontier with French Louisiana, were relocated to San Antonio where they were strung along the banks of the San Antonio River south of the Alamo. Along with the Alamo, Concepcion, San Jose, San Juan Capistrano, and San Francisco de Espada became the backbone of settlement in the area and one of the most important sites of missionization of the native American inhabitants on the eighteenth-century Texas frontier.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Bexar County has a rich archaeological heritage and considerable research has been undertaken there. Overall, more than 1500 sites have been recorded in the county. As one of the oldest towns in the state, San Antonio has a wide range of well preserved historic sites from the Spanish Colonial period to the recent past and numerous investigations have been carried out at these sites. Among the most important of these are the various archaeological projects that have been undertaken at the missions through the years; many of these have focused on San Antonio de Valero, the Alamo, the earliest and most famous of the Spanish missions (Sorrow 1972; Fox et al. 1976; Fox 1992). In addition to investigations at the Alamo, extensive historic investigations were conducted just to the southeast of the current project area in association with the construction of the Alamodome (Fox et al. 1997a, 1997b, 1997c).

Lying along the Balcones Escarpment with its many springs and a wide variety of faunal and floral resources, the county witnessed a long history of intensive exploitation by Native Americans dating back to the earliest times and many important excavations of prehistoric sites have been undertaken in the San Antonio area. Archaeological investigations have been carried out at a number of significant sites in this area, including the Walker Ranch site (Fox 1979; Hudson et al. 1974; Scurlock 1973), the Panther Springs site (Black and McGraw 1985), the Granberg site (Schuetz 1966), the St. Mary's Hall site (Hester 1978a, 1978b), the Pavo Real Site (Collins et al. 2003), the Culebra Creek Site (Nickels et al. 1998), and at various sites

along the proposed Wurzbach Parkway (Black 1998; Black et al. 1993; Potter and Black 1995; Potter et al. 1995). There have also been a series of important investigations at various historic and prehistoric sites at Camp Bullis (Boyd et al. 1990; Cestaro et al. 2000; Cestaro et al. 2001; Katz 1987; Kibler and Scott 2000; Maslyk and Kibler 1998; Scott 1999). Several investigations have also been conducted in Government Canyon State Natural Area (Greaves et al. 2002; McNatt et al. 2002)

Several archaeological sites have been recorded in the general area around the park although none were in immediately adjacent areas. In 1987, C. K. Chandler recorded a campsite and burned rock midden a little over a kilometer southwest of the project area along Culebra Creek (TARL files). More recently, Nickels (2004) recorded several prehistoric sites along Culebra Creek in the Cathedral Rock Nature Park about a kilometer south of the Oscar Perez Memorial Park. Several of the sites in the Cathedral Rock Park, including 41BX1592 and 41BX1594, were judged as having some research potential and it was recommended that all the newly discovered sites be avoided.

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

Prior to the field work, the THC and the Texas Historic Sites Atlas online were consulted for previous projects and previously recorded sites within and in vicinity of the project area. In addition, various map and bibliographic resources were consulted.

Survey of the Oscar Perez Memorial Park was accomplished according to standard methods adapted to the particular circumstances of the park area and its layout. A 100% pedestrian survey was conducted of the entire park area followed by backhoe trenching and shovel testing. Eight backhoe trenches were excavated in the park area, looking for deep soils and the possibility of deeply buried cultural materials. While no buried cultural remains were found, deep soils were noted in the extreme southeast corner of the park. Several trenches were placed in this area.

Trenches were excavated to depths ranging from 180 to 270 centimeters. Excavation of all six trenches was monitored by one or both archaeologists. All were excavated in approximate 20-centimeter layers with each bucket load examined for sign of artifacts, and the trench itself scrutinized for artifacts, features, or paleosols that might indicate previous stable surfaces. In particular, the trenching was informative about the depth of deposits across the entire park area. The results of this trenching are described in the next section of this report.

Shovel tests were used to augment trenching in areas where shallow soils were present. Overall, nine shovel tests were excavated to examine the subsurface in areas where the ground surface was obscured by vegetation. These were found to be generally gravelly near the surface and several suggested that the area had been previously plowed. While some unmodified chert cobbles and pebbles were noted, no cultural materials were identified.

The park area and proposed developments are shown in Figure 4, which also shows the location of backhoe trenches and shovel tests. No cultural resource sites were recorded in the survey and no cultural materials were collected for curation.

SURVEY RESULTS

Walkover survey of the park area revealed largely modern trash along Timber Path and Meadow Trace corridor but little other evidence of surficial cultural remains elsewhere in the park. A few pieces of scattered concrete at the extreme northwestern corner of the park (Figure 5) were examined as a possible feature but these appear to have been dumped rather than an in situ feature. A shovel test located in this area found only modern trash at and immediately below the surface. Also, while three or four broken chert cobbles were observed on the surface throughout the park, none of these showed convincing evidence of cultural origins. In the absence of verifiable, in situ cultural materials, no archaeological sites were recorded in the survey.

After a brief walkover survey of the entire park area, backhoe trenching was undertaken to establish the depths of soils and the possibility of cultural materials. Trenching was undertaken as the landform was clearly an alluvial deposit lying between a major creek and its smaller tributary. Surface examination of the park showed that the highest point between the two creeks, the drainage divide, followed Timber Path in a roughly northwest-southeast direction. A narrow strip of land along Timber Path and Meadow Trace was generally flat following this divide, although still with a slight slope toward the unnamed tributary creek. The remainder of the park east of this area sloped gently toward the tributary at roughly a one-percent grade.



Figure 5. View of concrete debris around Shovel Test 1 area, knife blade points north.

Eight backhoe trenches were excavated in the park area, ranging from 2 meters deep in the deeper alluvium at the southeast corner to 60 centimeters over shallow bedrock in the northeast corner (see Figure 4). While none of the trenches yielded cultural material, all provided valuable information on the depth and character of deposits in the park area. The trenches revealed that Holocene alluvial soil deposition was

shallow to nonexistent at the western edge of the park, closest to the drainage divide along Timber Path, and deepest in the southeast corner.

Trench 1 was excavated at the southwest corner of the park, about 35 meters north of Timber Path and about 55 meters northeast of the corner of Timber Path and Meadow Trace. This area lies at the eastern edge of the proposed parking lot near where a softball/baseball complex will be built. The trench was about 4 meters long and oriented at 40 degrees; maximum depth was 185 centimeters. Four soil zones were observed in the trench.

Zone I – 0-30 cm - very dark brown (10YR2/2) clay; strong, coarse subangular blocky; very hard, compact; occasional coarse sand and fine rock fragments; vertic cracking; few fine carbonate flecks throughout; lower boundary straight, vague; A horizon; no cultural remains.

Zone II – 30-75 cm – dark brown (7.5YR3/3) clay to clay loam; moderate to strong medium to coarse subangular blocky; finer rock fragments than layer above and less evidence of vertic cracking, decreasing with depth; hard, compact; occasional pockets of very fine carbonate gravel at base; lower boundary straight, sharp; B horizon; no cultural remains.

Zone IIIa – 75-135 cm – strong brown (7.5YR5/6) clay loam; weak fine subangular blocky; hard, compact; considerable mixing of upper sediments down into upper 40-50 cm of zone, probably from vertic displacement; small carbonate nodules (> 2mm < 2cm, averaging about .8-1 cm) present, denser at top but continuing into next zone; lower boundary straight, indistinct; Ck horizon; no cultural material.

Zone IIIb – 135-170 cm – yellowish red (5YR5/6) clay loam; massive; soft, moist; fewer carbonates than level above; no mixing observed; very occasional limestone gravels up to 5 cm; both Zones IIIa and IIIb represent relatively early deposition with good carbonate development; C horizon; no cultural material.

No cultural materials of any kind were observed in the soil removed from the trench nor were any cultural materials observed in a careful examination and partial troweling of the intact trench profiles. The sediments observed in the trench are alluvial in origin, but all traces of depositional features have been removed by pedogenic activity. The position of this trench near the drainage divide and high above the modern alluvial deposits of either creek suggests that these sediments are ancient, perhaps with little chance of containing human cultural remains. While carbonate development in Zone IIIa is not strong, it nonetheless suggests a long pedogenic history. Of some interest is that although this area seems likely to have been plowed in the past no clear evidence of a plow zone was observed in the A horizon (nor was any such evidence observed in any of the trenches). Gravel deposits observed in the upper layers of shovel tests at the site suggest mixing through plowing, but the profile here and elsewhere indicates that such plowing has not occurred for some time.

Trench 2 was located about 70 meters north-northeast of Trench 1 along the southern boundary of the park within the area designated for construction of the softball/baseball complex. The trench was 4 meters long, a maximum of 160 centimeters deep and oriented at 25 degrees. The profile, essentially identical to that of Trench 1, showed four basic soil zones. The Zone I A horizon extended down to about 30 centimeters depth, the Zone II B horizon to 70 centimeters, and the boundary between the Zone IIIa and Zone IIIb C horizon layers lie at about 130 centimeters. No cultural material was observed. Although slightly lower on the gently sloping surface, this trench revealed a remarkably similar profile indicating that the slope and soil degree of soil development has been stable for some time



Figure 6. Carbonate development in Zone IIIa (lower half of photo), south wall profile of Trench 1.

Trench 3 was excavated about 75 meters north-northeast of Trench 2 close to the southeastern corner of the park in an area where an unirrigated practice field will be built. This trench revealed somewhat deeper organic-rich soils with little carbonate development and gravel deposits at the base.

Zone I – 0-40 cm - very dark brown (10YR2/2) clay; strong, medium subangular blocky; very hard, compact; occasional coarse sand and fine rock fragments; vertic cracking; few fine carbonate flecks throughout; lower boundary straight, vague; A horizon; no cultural remains.

Zone IIa – 40-85 cm – dark brown (10YR3/3) clay; very strong, coarse subangular blocky; clay skins on peds; evidence of vertic cracking decreasing with depth; hard, compact; occasional pockets of very fine carbonate gravel at base; lower boundary straight, indistinct; Btk horizon; no cultural remains.

Zone IIb – 85-150 cm – dark yellowish brown (10YR4/4) clay loam; moderate, medium subangular blocky; moist, softer than above, but still compact; few to no very fine carbonate nodules at base; lower boundary straight, sharp; C horizon; no cultural remains.

Zone IV – 150-175 cm – strong brown (7.5YR5/6) loam with limestone and chert gravel; gravel makes up 40 to 60% of zone; some carbonates in matrix, mostly at top of zone, and some carbonate encrustations on gravels; B horizon; no cultural remains.

The deposits in this trench, while roughly similar in color and texture to those of Trenches 1 and 2, are considerably younger and probably reflect alluvial sedimentation by the small unnamed drainage that lies

about a 100 meters to the east, perhaps aided by floodwater deposits from Culebra Creek extending into the smaller drainage. As with the sediments in Trenches 1 and 2, any trace of alluvial structures has been removed through pedogenic activity, but the lack of carbonate development here that was seen in Zone IIIa of Trenches 1 and 2, as well as the significantly lower elevation of Trench 3, indicates that the Trench 3 profile is somewhat younger. Although no attempt was made to date these sediments, it is likely that the deposition of this sediment did occur during the Holocene and it is at least theoretically possible for the burial of cultural remains in this small corner of the park. For this reason, Trenches 7 and 8 were added in this area. Nonetheless, no evidence of cultural material or any other clues to a former stable surface such as a paleosol were observed in Trench 3 or the added trenches.

Trench 4 was located roughly midway along the eastern boundary of the park area where the unirrigated practice field will be built. About 75 meters northwest of Trench 3, Trench 4 was 4 meters long, 160 centimeters deep, and oriented at 47 degrees. The profile of this trench was very similar to that of Trench 1. Three soil zones were recognized. The Zone I A horizon extended to about 30 centimeters, Zone II to 100 centimeters and Zone IIIa extended to the base of the profile at 150 centimeters.

Trench 5 was excavated near the northeast corner of the proposed park development in the area where a soccer/football field is proposed. It was located about 65 meters northwest of Trench 4 and 20 meters southeast of the old fence row that runs south of the northwestern boundary of the park. This trench, oriented at about 40 degrees, was only 3 meters long and about 80 centimeters deep. The trench bottom cut into soft limestone at 15 centimeters depth. Above this soft white, cobby and chalky limestone was a shallow, very dark brown clay A horizon similar to that seen in all the trenches excavated in the park area. No cultural materials were observed in this very shallow soil.

Trench 6 was located along the northwest boundary of the proposed park development within the soccer/football field noted above. It was about 90 meters southwest of Trench 5 and 20 meters southeast of the old fence row that runs south of the northwestern boundary of the park. This trench was 4 meters long, 60 centimeters deep, and was oriented at about 45 degrees. This trench encountered limestone at just about 60 centimeters. The upper sediment of this trench was essentially identical to the very dark brown clay A horizon seen in other trenches in the park. Below about 40 centimeters, this same matrix featured large flat limestone and chert flags. The limestone was somewhat harder than that encountered in the nearby Trench 5, but the softer nature of the Trench 5 limestone is thought to be due to its proximity to the surface. No cultural material was observed in this trench.

Trench 7 was excavated about midway between Trenches 3 and 4 to expand coverage in the area of deeper soils at the park's southeast corner. It was about 35 meters southeast of Trench 4 and 40 meters northwest of Trench 3. About 4 meters long, 120 centimeters deep, and oriented at 60 degrees, the trench was excavated within the area proposed as an unirrigated practice field. Four soil zones were identified; these were essentially identical to those seen in Trench 3 but somewhat shallower.

Trench 8 was excavated just 20 meters southwest of Trench 3 to further investigate the deep soils in this corner of the park. This trench was 5 meters long, 2 meters deep, and oriented at about 45 degrees. Like Trenches 3, 4 and 7, it was excavated within the proposed unirrigated practice field. Figure 7 shows the general area around Trenches 2, 3 and 8, showing the small drainage valley in the background. Judging from the topography and backhoe trenches along the eastern edge of the park, the area of deep alluvial soils is only a tiny corner of the park, extending out some 50 meters from the corner. Above this, the soils show very little potential for deep burial of cultural remains.

In addition to the backhoe trenches, nine shovel tests were also excavated in the park in areas where surface visibility was limited due to vegetation (see Figure 4). All were excavated in ten-centimeter levels. None were screened because the clayey surface strata would not pass through a screen easily; instead, the

excavated matrix was carefully troweled through upon excavation. These tests, excavated from 30 to 50 centimeters depth below the surface, all encountered the same very dark brown clay seen in the upper zone of the backhoe trenches. Most had some limestone and chert gravel in the first and second levels, a possible indicator that the field had been plowed in the past. Shovel Test 1, located adjacent to several concrete chunks in the northwest corner of the park, yielded two shards of modern colorless glass and a fragment of a plastic bottle in the upper ten centimeters. Nothing was found below this and the test suggested that the concrete was not an intact footing but dumped. In fact, a small quantity of modern trash was observed all along the road and sidewalk margin. These modern items were not collected and no other cultural materials were observed in any of the shovel tests.



Figure 7. South side of park looking east, Trench 2 at right, backhoe and Trenches 3 and 8 at left.

Only one other cultural feature was noted in the park area walkover. The park encompasses the remains of an old barbed wire fence, now marked by a row of trees and a few partially fallen fence posts, just south of the actual boundary of the park. Two shovel tests were excavated in the area north of this fence, but no evidence of cultural remains was observed. Along the fence line southeast of Shovel Test 2 (see Figure 4) is an area where a concrete footing has been poured, apparently to stabilize a cross-brace support in the old fence. Downhill from this just a few paces, there is evidence of gullying along the old fence line. A few fast growing trees such as hackberries have cracked the concrete with recent growth but there is little evidence that the concrete footing or the fence itself are very old. In any case, while these features may pre-date the modern developed neighborhood, they do not constitute an archaeological site nor are not thought to be culturally or historically significant in any way,



Figure 8. Concrete footing on old fence brace near north edge of park, looking south..

CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological survey of the Oscar Perez Memorial Park in northwest San Antonio was accomplished through surface walkover with shovel tests and the excavation of eight backhoe trenches. This survey and trenching failed to locate any intact historic or prehistoric cultural materials and no cultural resource sites were recorded. For the most part it is thought that the soils across the park are unlikely to yield buried cultural resources although some deep soil development is present in the southeast corner of the park.

Given the lack of cultural resources and the paucity of impacts within original soils at the park, it is recommended that the City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department be allowed to continue with present and future development plans for the facility. It should be noted, however, that any potential future developments in city-owned land east of the existing park along the small tributary are likely to encounter larger areas of the deep soils noted in the southeast corner of the existing park. Although no evidence of buried cultural resource deposits was observed within the park, it is thought that the age of these deep sediments is sufficiently young enough to warrant further examination. Thus, if this area east of the existing park were ever to be developed, archaeological survey with trenching is recommended to prevent inadvertent damage to buried cultural resources.

As with any archaeological survey, especially ones that sample deep alluvial areas, the discovery of unexpected and unrecorded cultural resources materials is always possible. Should cultural materials be encountered during excavation in the natural soil levels of the park, the Texas Historical Commission should be contacted immediately.

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