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COUNCIL OF TEXAS ARCHAEOLOGISTS
ARCHIVE OF TEXAS ARCHAEOLOGY
(DBCAH)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS
AT
JOURDAN-BACHMAN FARM
TRAVIS, COUNTY, TEXAS

Texas Antiquities Permit No. 347

Prepared for:
The City of Austin, Texas

Written by:
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ABSTRACT

During May 1983 archaeological investigations were conducted at the Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farm, Travis County, Texas under the direction of Dr. Peter Nichols in accordance with the specifications of Antiquities Permit Number 347. The purpose of the investigations was to provide the data necessary for a comprehensive management plan to facilitate park planning and to integrate the extant cultural resources within the plan. The work accomplished included an inventory of prehistoric and historic cultural resources within the park; National Register of Historic Places eligibility testing of prehistoric site 41TV353 and preliminary investigation of historic site 41TV664.

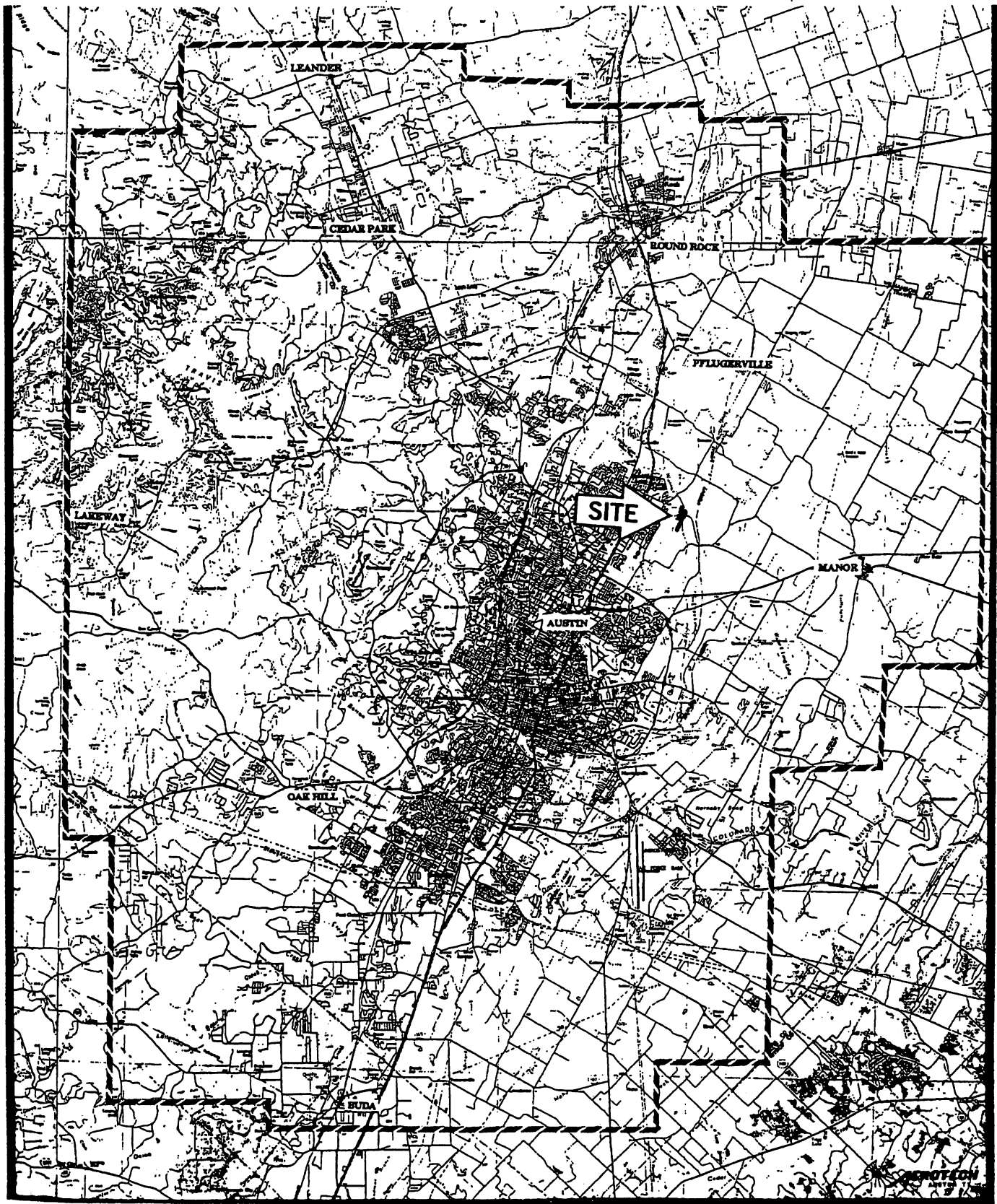
Prehistoric site 41TV353 was found to have intact subsurface deposits despite intensive uncontrolled digging in past years. This site demonstrates an approximately 3,000 year long history, documented by projectile points and cultural deposits. Contiguous with a Middle Archaic midden is a terrace occupation which may prove to be a valuable means of understanding non-midden activities during this period. It is felt that site 41TV353 is eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

The architectural portions of historic site 41TV664 have been destroyed, but thin subsurface deposits are intact. These dated from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. It is not thought that site 41TV664 is eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Both sites should be considered for State Archeological Landmark designation, which will allow maximum protection under the current state antiquities laws.

INTRODUCTION

During May 1983 archaeological investigation were conducted at the Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farm, Travis County, Texas (Figure 1) under the direction of Peter Nichols, Ph.D. in accordance with the specifications on Texas Antiquities Permit Number 347. The purpose of the investigation was to provide the data necessary for a comprehensive management plan to facilitate park planning and to integrate the extant cultural resources within the plan. The work accomplished included an inventory of prehistoric and historic cultural resources within the park; National Register of Historic Places eligibility testing of prehistoric site 41TV353 and preliminary investigation of historic site 41TV664.

The Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farm is part of the Austin Parks and Recreation Department. It attempts to reconstruct and demonstrate Central Texas farm life of the late 1800's.



General Area Map with Location of Project Area
Figure 1

ENVIRONMENTAL BACKGROUND

The Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farm is located on the eastern edge of the Edwards Plateau near the boundary between the Gulf Coastal Plain and Interior Plains physiographic division as set forth by Fenneman (1938:691). The Balcones Escarpment separates the lower, flatter Blackland Prairies to the east from the more elevated Edwards Plateau to the west (Figure 2). Both juniper covered limestone and caliche outcrops characteristic of the Edwards Plateau and fields of Blackland Prairie soils occur within the farm. Walnut Creek, a major permanent stream, flows approximately west to east and divides the farm. In addition an unnamed intermittent stream fed by temporary springs flows south and enters Walnut Creek within the farm.

The present climate is humid subtropical with hot summers and mild winters. Summer maximum temperatures average 91.7-95.9 degrees F, and summer minimums 71.4-73.5 degrees F. The winter maximum temperatures averages 60.3-63.8 degrees F, and winter minimums 39.3-42.8 degrees F. On the average, subfreezing temperatures occur less than 25 days per year with the average length of the freeze-free period being 270 days. The greatest amounts of precipitation occur in late spring and early fall, but thunderstorms and heavy rains occur throughout the year. Snowfall is not a significant source of moisture since several years may pass without measurable snowfall (NOAA 1981).

The vegetation of the Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farm reflects its ecotonal situation with riparian, woodland and grassland vegetation present. Woody species on the farm include: live oak (Quercus virginia), elm (Ulmus sp.), Mexican juniper (Juniperus ashei), mesquite (Prosopis glandulosa), Mexican plum (Prunus mexicana), Texas persimmon (Diospyros texana), hackberry (Celtis laevigata), pecan (Carya illinoensis), toothache tree (Xanthoxylum hirsutum), wafer ash (Ptelea trifoliata), and walnut (Juglans sp.).

Grass species observed include johnsongrass (Sorghum halupense), panic grass (Panicum sp.), wild rye (Elymus canadensis), curly mesquite (Hilaria belangeri), little bluestem (Schizachyrium scoparium), silver bluestem (Bothriochloa saccharoides), indiagrass (Sorghastrum nutans), grama grass (Bouteloua sp.), and buffalo grass (Buchloe dactyloides).

The fauna also reflects the ecotonal situation of the farm, which lies within the transitional zone of the Balcones Biotic Province (Blair 1950:112). The fauna includes species from surrounding provinces. None are unique to this area alone. At least 57 species of mammals are present (ibid:113). Characteristic mammalian species include white tailed deer

(Odocoileus virginianus), California jackrabbit (Lepus californicus), fox squirrel (Sciurus niger), opossum (Didelphia virginiana), coyote (Canus latrans), raccoon (Procyon lotor), Eastern cotton tail rabbit (Sylvilagus floridanus), and striped skunk (Mephitis mephitis).

Reconstruction of long term climatic changes, based on pollen records, vertebrates, and sediment characteristics are still debated. In 1967 Lundelius presented a sequence for the past 8,000-10,000 years based largely on fossil fauna remains. He divided the mammalian species of the late-Pleistocene and post-Pleistocene into three categories: (1) large extinct forms such as sloths, proboscidians, etc.; (2) extant species such as muskrat, vole, and lemming which are no longer present in Central Texas; and (3) species such as coyote, skunk, deer, etc., which are still found in Central Texas. All of the species occurred in Central Texas until about 8,000 years ago when the majority of the animals in Group One became extinct. The animals in Group Two gradually withdrew from Central Texas presumably in response to environmental shifts, with the last disappearing about 1,000 years ago. The species in Group Two presently live in areas that are wetter and/or colder, suggesting that Central Texas has become drier and warmer in the past 8,000-10,000 years (ibid: 288-319). Bryant and Shafer (1977: 15) postulated, primarily on pollen evidence, that Central Texas has not experienced dramatic changes in vegetation during the last 10,000 years, but has experienced an increase in grass and herb species. These changes would have been gradual enough that the aboriginal inhabitants would have had little trouble adapting to them.

By the time of the settlement of Central Texas by people of European and African ancestry, the climate was essentially like the present. Changes during the past 100 years such as the decreases in native grasses and increase in mesquite are not due as much to climatic changes as to cultural practices such as plowing and overgrazing.

Short term climatic fluctuations in large part determine the success of modern and historic agricultural crops. Periods of drought affected prehistoric nonagricultural peoples. Available wild plant foods such as pecans, walnuts, mesquite beans and blackberries, would be affected by local climatic conditions in much the same way as cultivated crops. The variety of wild plant and animal foods within the region containing the Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farm would make it much easier for aboriginal peoples to survive periods of drought.

Plentiful water and a diverse environment provide the farm with a rich resource base. The most intense activity during prehistoric times has been documented near the confluence of the unnamed tributary and Walnut Creek (Fig. 3). During the historic period the Jourdan and Bachman families built their

PIONEER FARM PROJECT MAP

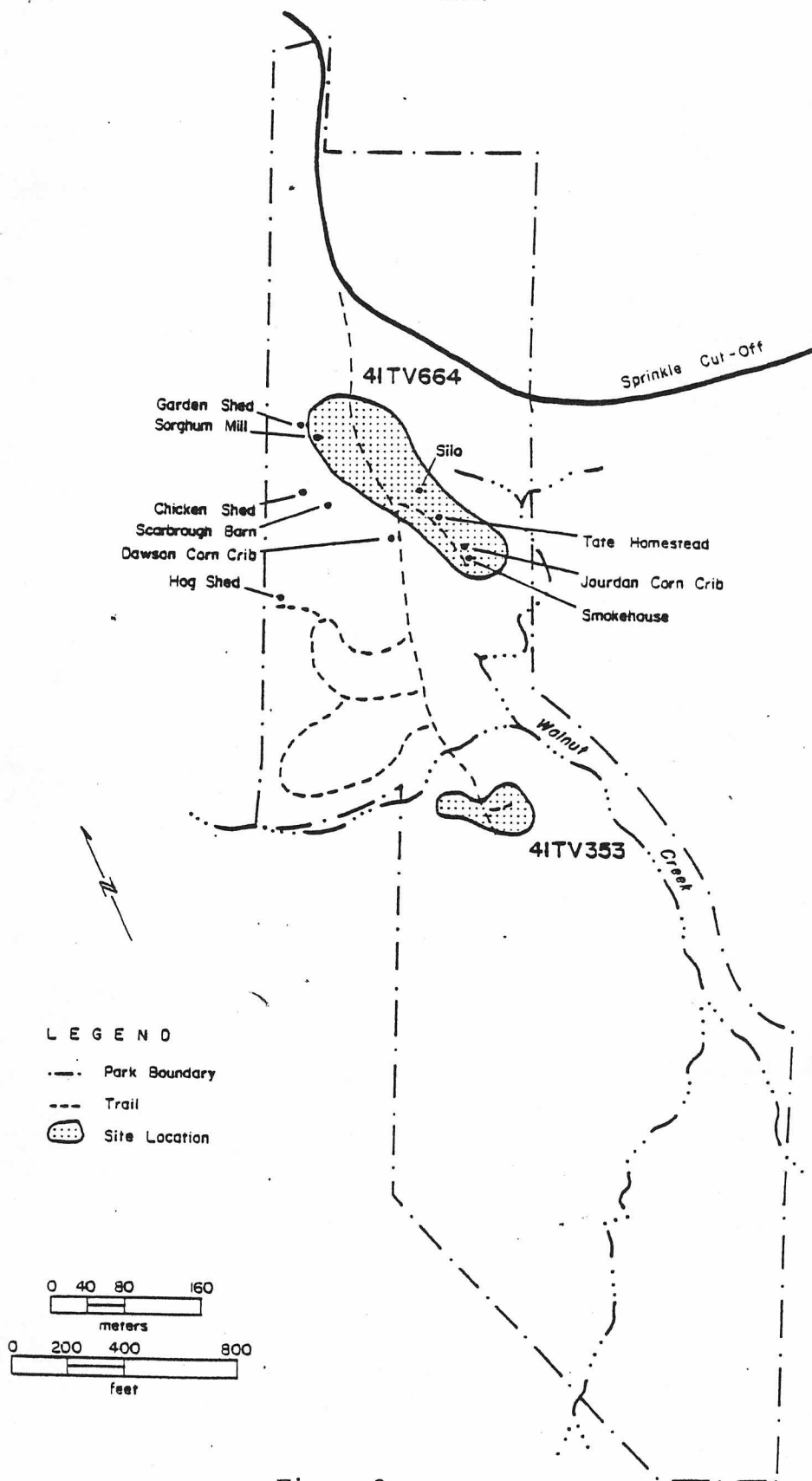


Figure 3

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51

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

The prehistory of the Central Texas region, spanning approximately 10,000 years, is complex. Three stages of cultural development based on economic exploitative strategies and the attendant subsistence and social base (as defined by Willey and Phillips 1959) are represented. Within each stage, substages have been recognized which signify major social, structural, environmental, temporal, and material changes within the more general stage (Prewitt 1981).

The Paleoindian Stage (generally at least 10,000 to 8,500 B.P. [Before Present]) is characterized by large game hunting, mobile, seasonal migration, and somewhat limited tool kit with highly characteristic projectile point styles and workmanship. Recent evidence suggests that the stereotyped migratory lifeway heavily dependent on big game is somewhat erroneous; foraging probably contributed to the resources base more heavily than has been recognized. In the Central Texas area, evidence of Paleoindian remains have been discovered around major springs such as the San Marcos and Barton groups. However, the lack of well documented remains from this stage in Central Texas prevents an understanding of the lifeway in this region.

Perhaps one of the most significant discoveries has been the "Leanderthal Lady" at the Wilson-Leonard Site in Williamson County. The presence of an intentionally interred body with associated grave goods at a vertical level which corresponds to approximately 9,500 B.P. has provided a significant data base enabling dietary, pathologic, and environmental studies to be conducted for this find. A better understanding of the culture, diet, diseases, and associated material resources may be gained through this one occurrence.

A change in the economic base, marked by a change in tool kit and food acquisition strategies, occurred about 8,000 years B.P. The Archaic Stage is typified by a emphasis on gathering food resources and small game hunting. This adaptive strategy is widespread and has been recognized for most of North America, with local variations signified by changes in tools, subsistence, and social organization.

The Central Texas Archaic can be divided into 11 phases which represent social, chronological, economic, and material changes (Prewitt 1981: 75). These phases can be roughly correlated with the Early, Middle, Late Archaic periods, designations which primarily refer to temporal association and secondarily, cultural characteristics. The Archaic Stage is characterized by a diversification of cultural practices and remains. In Central Texas, a number of kinds of sites have been identified: open, camp, rockshelter, cemetery, and special activity.

Four Early Archaic phases have been defined: Circleville,

San Geronimo, Jarrell, and Oakalla (Prewitt 1981). This period is generally characterized by small bands which utilized a broad geographic area. An emphasis on food gathering is suggested by the tool kit.

The most dominant site type which occurs during the Middle Archaic is the burned rock midden. Although the exact function of these large rock accumulations is still not well understood, the material remains indicate that both plant and animal resources were exploited in roughly equal proportions. Generally this kind of site is present in the Clear Fork, Marshall, Round Rock, San Marcos, and rarely, Uvalde phases, and only rarely occurs after approximately 1,700 B.P. (ibid: 73). The last three phases of the Archaic--the Uvalde, Twin Sisters, and Driftwood phases--represent more broadly based subsistence. A change in the ratio of projectile points to other tools suggests less dependence on hunting and more on foraging (ibid: 74).

The Neo-Archaic Stage which follows the Archaic represents a major change in material culture which some believe corresponds to changing environmental conditions. In other areas, this stage following the Archaic is associated with the practice of agriculture and more sedentary lifeways, but scant evidence for agricultural adaption has been found for this stage in Central Texas to date. Rather, the differentiation of this stage from the previous is based upon a dramatic change in material culture: pottery, arrow points, and subsequently, the use of the bow appears for the first time. Two phases are recognized for this stage: the Austin and Toyah. Although economic strategies remain basically the same for these phases as the two preceding, cultural practices change. The presence of formal cemeteries signifies an important social change. Bison appear again during the Toyah Phase, and an attendant emphasis upon large game hunting occurs. The end of this stage is signified by the appearance of European goods and the subsequent intrusion of European economic practices.

Relatively little is known about the Native American groups in the early portions of the Historic Stage, and no specific phases have been defined. Historic accounts of the early and middle 1800's indicate the presence of Tonkawas, Comanches, and Apaches in the Walnut Creek area (Lynn and Fuszek 1981: 12); however, few historic Indian sites have been identified. Eugene Giles, former owner of a portion of the farm, reported in his journal that "Tonkaway Indians camped on the west side of Walnut Creek on F. Jourdan land..." as late as the 1870's (Giles 1937-1939: 65).

Previous Investigations in the Project Area

A number of archaeological investigations have occurred within the Walnut Creek drainage, many quite recently in response to pressure from urban development. Prior to 1980 only 27 sites

were known. Since 1980 the City of Austin has acquired property along Walnut Creek for greenbelts and developed parkland, including the Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farm as a working interpretative display park. Investigations of these properties have resulted in the identification of an additional 32 archaeological sites and the nomination of a portion of the Walnut Creek drainage to the National Register of Historic Places. These facts attest to the rapid growth of the area as well as increased concern for historic preservation.

In 1980 Lynn conducted a survey of Walnut Creek Park and identified nine prehistoric and eleven historic archaeological sites. These sites are now part of the Walnut Creek Archaeological District. A second phase of investigation was carried out for three of the sites: the Wells Site, 41TV368; the Ross' Spring House, 41TV370; and the Clearly Home Place, 41TV379 (Lynn and Fuszek 1981). A full range of projectile points styles representing all phases of the Archaic Stage, as well as the Toyah Phase, were present at the Wells Site (ibid: 60). The Ross' Spring Site contains a prehistoric component which probably dates to the Archaic (ibid: 60).

Additional work within the District was conducted in 1982 and included testing five sites and mitigation of two others (Espey, Huston and Associates 1982). A survey conducted in 1983 of the Wells Branch Development resulted in the identification of four prehistoric sites, six historic sites and one site which contains both historic and prehistoric components (Espey, Huston and Associates 1983). The prehistoric sites identified are generally thinly deposited and horizontally dispersed lithic scatters.

One of the more significant sites, 41TV134, the Polecat Hollow Site (Christie 1978), lies immediately upstream from the project area. This site was first investigated by the landowner in 1964 and was brought to the attention of Dr. E. Mott Davis of the Department of Anthropology, University of Texas at Austin. Two major activity areas were defined for this site. The first is a large burned rock midden surrounded by areas of debitage concentration and clustered hearths and firepits. Approximately 450 projectile points, recovered from the midden by 1976, represent a full range of the most common Central Texas styles from almost all phases of the Archaic Stage. In addition, charcoal, faunal material, bone tools, metates, manos, gouges, axes, and various other probable wood or hide working tools were recovered.

The second site area contained an unknown number of human burials; the landowner, James Overcash, reported twenty two. Although no direct association of artifacts with the burials was demonstrated, a number of objects generally associated with burials were covered. The owner has retained all of this material. Unfortunately much information has been lost due to lack of controlled excavation techniques and reporting. This site was one of the most important burned rock middens in Travis County, containing uninterrupted cultural and chronological

sequences which span the period between approximately 6,500 B.C. and 300 B.C.

The Jetta Court Site 41TV151, also within the Walnut Creek watershed, was investigated in 1968 (Wesolowsky, Hester and Brown 1976). This site contains two buried middens; the lower corresponds roughly to the Jarrell Phase while the upper contains evidence of the Uvalde, Driftwood, and Austin phases.

The midden at the Pioneer Farm, 41TV353, has been commonly known as the "Farm Mound" for almost 20 years. It was formally recorded in 1977 by Larry Gilman in conjunction with a testing program undertaken to determine what kinds of materials were present at the site. Little of the cultural material excavated by Gilman remains today; no formal report was produced, and the notes were lost. The written information we do have indicates the presence of the complete sequence of Archaic projectile point styles at this site. Gilman reported the presence of acorns at the deepest level of his one excavation unit.

Interviews with James Overcash, owner of the Polecat Hollow Site, and local resident Doug Henniger (personal communication 1983) revealed that 41TV353 had been extensively potted by Henniger in the 1960's before the site was acquired by the Austin Heritage Foundation. Henniger dug a trench approximately ten feet wide around the edge of the midden with a bulldozer. He then dug into the midden using hand tools supplemented by the machinery. He collected tools and whole projectile points, including ground stone, triangular "chisels," "U-backed points," Pedernales, Bulverde, Castroville, Tortugas, a few Angostura, and many Nolan points (ibid). He indicated that defined hearths were also present. No notes, photographs or other forms of documentation were made by Henniger. Areas not excavated were confined to the area beneath the trees in order to keep the tree roots intact. After Henniger completed his work, he backfilled all areas. Thus, mixing of soils, artifacts, and other culturally related materials has occurred in approximately 80% of the midden. The current investigation has defined the site boundaries based on material recovered from shovel tests south of the midden. Detailed descriptions are provided on the site description section.

Historic

In 1852 Frederic and Harriet Jourdan settled land on Walnut Creek and built a house of heavy lumber hauled by ox team from the sawmill at Bastrop. In the 1860's the Jourdan family increased their land holdings to 2,000 acres, raising cattle and cotton. With the introduction of barbed wire in the early 1880's cotton became the dominant crop. In 1887, Fredric Jourdan died and the land was divided among his heirs.

From 1890 until World War I was a boom time for cotton. In 1904 the Katy Railroad came to Sprinkle giving a further boost to the economy of the area. At its height Sprinkle contained a general store, blacksmith shop, a gristmill and a cotton gin.

However, by the 1940's cotton was abandoned as a crop and most of the present fields of the Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farm began to grow up in brush and scrub. The railroad was abandoned and today Sprinkle, as a commercial center, is no more.

The present Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farm was donated to the Heritage Society of Austin in 1957 by Eugene Giles and his sister Laura Giles who were descendants of Frederic and Harriet Jourdan. The land was donated with the stipulation that it would help to preserve the lifestyle and heritage of the Central Texas Pioneers. The Austin Natural Science Association leased the land from the Heritage Society in 1974 and entered into an agreement with the Austin Parks and Recreation Department to operate and maintain the farm.

SUMMARY

The archaeological investigations undertaken at two sites within the farm boundaries have allowed retrieval of information which aids in understanding the cultural history of the land and in formulating a master development plan for the farm. Site 41TV353 was found to have intact subsurface deposits despite intensive, uncontrolled digging in past years. Historic site 41TV664 may contain intact subsurface deposits also; however, the architectural portions of the site have been destroyed.

The prehistoric site demonstrates an approximately 3,000 year-long history, documented by projectile points and cultural deposits over one meter thick. The association of a Middle Archaic midden with a contiguous terrace occupation may prove to be a valuable means of understanding non-midden activities during this period. The lack of time diagnostics on the terrace, however, precluded positive association of the two areas. Nonetheless, the area was utilized intensively in prehistoric times, which indicates that available resources were present and were utilized.

The historic site 41TV664 has been altered in the past fifteen years, but no apparent subsurface disturbances have occurred. The thin deposits may yet contain information relevant to the late nineteenth to early twentieth century farmstead. Recently, techniques to map spatial distributions of historic materials in shallow sites have been effective and informative (Moir 1982) in the interpretation of farm life and prediction of farm related activities within a site. Utilization of these techniques at site 41TV664 may result in the definition of the original siting of the log cabin, outbuildings and related farm activity areas. Should alterations or disturbances be planned for the site, the incorporation of these methods into an assessment program is recommended in order to determine whether further investigations are warranted.

Both sites should be considered for State Archeological Landmark (SAL) designation, which will allow maximum protection under the current state antiquities laws. Specific recommendations for the sites and methods for integrating the sites into the farm management plan have been included in the following section of this document.



#422 VILLAGE BLACKSMITH IN
SPRINGVILLE STORE & POST OFFICE
1905