

ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS IN  
CROSBY AND DICKENS COUNTIES, TEXAS  
DURING THE WINTER, 1966-1967

By

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## THE PETE CREEK SITE (X41Cb1)

The Pete Creek Site (X41Cb1) is located twelve miles west-northwest of Spur, Texas, on the northwestern slope of Bunker Hill. The site lies approximately 1,000 feet west of the easternmost L-7 Ranch fenceline, and 2,000 feet west of the eastern border of Crosby County. Some 2,500 feet west is the bed of Pete Creek, sometimes called Pete S. Creek (after an early rancher in the area, Pete Slaughter). Below, and some 600 feet northwest of the site, on a tributary of Pete Creek, a large pond, Shaw Tank, has been constructed (Fig. 2).

Pete Creek is a broad, sandy-bottomed stream which today flows only intermittently. It is a part of the drainage system of the White River (a tributary of the Brazos) into which it flows some three miles to the southwest.

Bunker Hill is an erosional remnant of considerable local prominence. Its rounded crown is bordered on three sides by a low sandstone escarpment. At its northwesternmost extent a second bedrock outcrop occurs at distances of fifteen to thirty meters from the edge of the upper bluff, forming the "bunkers" for which the hill is named. The intervening space offers some protection from the winds that sweep in from the plains, and it is in this area that the inhabitants of the Pete Creek Site lived.

The rim is wedge-shaped in cross section, neither everted nor inverted, with a slightly rounded lip. Exterior and interior surfaces are smooth and undecorated and a light orange in color. The core is somewhat darker, approaching a yellow-gray. The temper, which is crushed bone, is visible on both surfaces as well as on broken edges. The temper particles, like the paste, tend to be darker at the core than near the surfaces.

Dimensions: wall thickness: 2.7 - 4.2 mm.

Remarks: These sherds resemble closely a type of pottery associated with historic complexes in the Gulf Coastal region of Texas (Campbell, 1962: 334) and in Central Texas (Dessamae Lorrain, personal communication).

#### Glass Artifacts

##### GLASS BEAD

No. of specimens: 1

Description: This blue glass bead has the form of a slightly flattened sphere. It was manufactured by winding a small goblet of glass around a length of wire, leaving (when the bead was removed) a perfectly cylindrical central perforation. This method is contrasted with the more common hollow-cane method (See Duffield and Jelks, 1961: 40-41). The glass is

translucent and contains some bubbles which can be seen as pits when they occur at the surface. Before cleaning, the specimen was coated by a chalky patina.

Dimensions: diameter: 6.7 mm.; length: 5.5 mm.; diameter of central perforation: 1.3 mm.

Remarks: In his study of glass beads from Norteno Focus sites, R. K. Harris has described more than 180 types of glass beads. The form found at Pete Creek does not occur in his samples. One globular, wire-wound bead type is found at Norteno Focus sites, but it is made of amber glass (Harris, et al, 1965: 313). Harris (personal communication) places that form at prior to A.D. 1740.

### Non-Artifactual Materials

#### Flaking Debitage

The analysis of the flaking debitage (cores, flakes and chips) from the Pete Creek Site is not yet complete, and the following discussion is, of necessity, a superficial one. No attempt has been made to count, classify, or describe the thousands of flakes and chips recovered from the deposits, and the cores have been given only a cursory examination.

The most common type of core is a small, white, quartz pebble from which flakes have been removed. A number of common

## THE MORGAN JONES SITE (X41Cb2)

The Morgan Jones Site (so named to honor the landowner, Morgan Jones, Jr.) is a small rockshelter located in the rim of the caprock 7 miles south and 1 1/2 miles east of Crosbyton, Texas. It is situated at the north edge of a short canyon, the head of a tributary of Sand Creek, which in turn empties into the White River some nine airline miles to the southeast.

The canyon is perhaps a third of a mile long and a thousand yards wide at its mouth. Its walls break abruptly from the plane of the Llano Estacado and drop vertically 3 to 6 meters to a steep talus which slopes to Pleistocene and Recent terraces at the floor. The slopes are covered with grasses, juniper trees, and agarita shrubs. Flat areas in the bottom of the canyon support mesquite and, nearer the dry stream-bed, cottonwood and hackberry.

The shelter is situated in a small notch in the canyon rim, less than 3 meters below the surface of the Llano Estacado (Fig. 20). Its mouth is 2.75 meters wide and 0.90 meter high. Maximum depth of the shelter is 4.50 meters. The major portion of the floor is roughly rectangular, with a small alcove at the northern corner extending 1.50 meters further into the cliff (Fig. 21). The fill is a red-brown sand containing many small caliche pebbles. The upper

15 to 30 cm. is loose and contains rodent bones and debris from rodent nests. Lower deposits are more compact, are brighter red in color, and contain thin layers of caliche.

The Morgan Jones Site was discovered on January 9, 1967, during reconnaissance on the L-7 Ranch. The shelter was observed from the ranch headquarters' road and, upon closer inspection, was found to contain a pile of large caliche cobbles. These stones, ranging from the size of a grapefruit to that of a man's head, had been placed in such a position as to block the entrance of the small alcove. Only about 25 cm. clearance remained between the pile of stones and the ceiling of the shelter. The smaller stones were braced by a small caliche boulder, oblong in outline and in cross section, which had been placed at the outer edge of the pile. A small test at the front of this feature turned up five blue and one white glass seed beads and a small fragment of human bone, confirming that the site was a burial shelter and that it dated from the historic period.

On January 11, with the aid of Dessamae Lorrain of Southern Methodist University, the shelter was mapped and a cross section prepared. This was accomplished by establishing a level line (A-B, Fig. 21) and measuring from it, at right angles, the distances to the walls, ceiling, and floor.

On the following day, the burial was excavated. The caliche stones were carefully removed and the area around and behind them

blade: 21.2 mm.; thickness at eye: 48.7 mm.; thickness of metal in eye: 6.0 mm.

Remarks: This form of belt axe was manufactured during the major portion of the American historic era, perhaps from 1680-1870 (R. K. Harris, personal communication). It is probably of French or Anglo-American origin.

#### Glass Beads

Approximately 3,600 small glass beads were recovered from the fill surrounding the burial. These beads, called "seed" beads, are of the type often sewn to clothing and other objects for decorative purposes. They were manufactured by drawing out a thin tube of molten glass and, after cooling, breaking it into short sections. These sections are, at this stage, cylindrical, with angular edges. The sharp edges were smoothed by rolling the beads in a drum of heated sand. Depending on the length of the sections and degree of heat used, the finished beads may range from cylindrical to doughnut-shaped in form.

R. K. Harris, who has done important work in classifying and dating glass trade beads from historic Wichita sites on the South Plains, cleaned, classified, and described the glass beads from the Morgan Jones Site.

## Form I

No. of specimens: 403

Description: These are small, white, opaque, seed beads of compound construction. They are made up of an inner layer of white glass with a porcelain-like texture and a thin outer layer of clear glass which has a frosted appearance, perhaps due to age.

Dimensions: diameter: 2.8 - 4.5 mm.

Remarks: This type of bead (Type 45 in the Harris classification system) occurs in sites dated between 1700 and 1836 (R. K. Harris, personal communication).

## Form II

No. of specimens: ca. 3,100

Description: These are small, light blue to aquamarine beads of simple construction. Because of frosted surfaces they appear opaque, but in reality they are of slightly translucent glass. The glass contains many tiny bubbles, some of which were elongated during the manufacturing process. The elongated bubbles appear as striations to the unaided eye and give the beads a "sugar cane" appearance.

Dimensions: diameter: 2.5 - 4.2 mm.

Remarks: These beads (Harris' Type 46) also are present in sites dating from 1700 to 1836, and are thus not useful as a close dating device (R. K. Harris, personal communication).

### Form III

No. of specimens: 131

Description: The specimens in this group are also blue, but a little darker in color than those of Form II. The surfaces, however, are not frosted and the glass transmits light to the point of being nearly transparent. Bubbles are not nearly so frequent within the glass as in the Form II beads, and the elongated bubble form is nearly absent.

Dimensions: diameter: 2.5 - 4.0 mm.

Remarks: Beads of this type (Harris' Type 80) begin appearing on Wichita sites at about 1740 and continue through 1836 (R. K. Harris, personal communication).

### Form IV

No. of specimens: 2

Description: These beads are small, emerald green specimens of simple construction. They are translucent and have frosted surfaces. Bubbles occur in small numbers in the glass and appear as pits in the surface.

Dimensions: diameter: 3.0 and 3.1 mm.

Remarks: These specimens (Harris' Type 83) occur in Wichita sites dating from 1740 to 1836 (R. K. Harris, personal communication).

### Form V

No. of specimens: 2

Description: These are small, doughnut-shaped beads. They are translucent, dark blue in color and of simple construction. The surfaces are slightly frosted, and the glass contains an occasional air bubble.

Dimensions: diameters: 2.7 and 3.0 mm.

Remarks: Like Forms III and IV, this type of bead (Harris' Type 48) was introduced into Wichita sites at about 1740 (R. K. Harris, personal communication).

### Pigment

No. of specimens: 1

Description: This artifact is one-fourth of a lump of green pigment which originally had the shape of a flattened spheroid. The cut marks produced as a result of the quartering of the pigment are visible at one edge, and the surface shows small facets and scratches where pigment has been scraped away.

Dimensions: thickness of lump: 30.5 mm.

### Textile (Fig. 28)

No. of specimens: 1

Description: Preserved between the two brass objects previously described was a fragment of knit textile. It appears to

have been of two colors, with bands of blue at intervals in a natural or white field. Four beads (Form I) adhere to the cloth, arranged end to end in a line, but the thread which bound them to the fabric has decomposed.

Dimensions: thread diameter: 0.7 mm.

Remarks: This textile has not been examined by a person qualified to give technical details of the knit. The material is unidentified and its source unknown.

### Conclusions

Unfortunately, only one of the artifacts found with the Morgan Jones burial is a good indicator of the age of the site. That is, of course, the ornately embellished brass cinch buckle. Decoration of this sort appears to have become popular with the Spanish in Mexico at about 1790 and, like so many other things Spanish, fell into disfavor soon after the Mexican Revolution. It seems unlikely, then, that the cinch buckle was made after 1820 (Curtis Tunnell, personal communication). It could have been used, of course, for many years after its manufacture.

It has been suggested by Ray and Jelks (1964: 139-140) that the size and method of manufacture of seed beads may serve as an

indicator of age in eighteenth and nineteenth century historic sites. They note that two middle to late nineteenth century sites, the White Site in Yoakum County (Suhm, 1962) and the Yellowhouse Canyon burial in Lubbock County (Newcomb, 1955), yielded white seed beads which are all of simple construction, while the Pearson Site, which probably dates between 1740 and 1820, produced white seed beads which were all of compound Clear/Opaque White structure (Duffield and Jelks, 1961: 41-48). Partially on this basis, Ray and Jelks proposed a date for the Watson burial, which produced about equal numbers of simple and compound white seed beads, at somewhere earlier than mid-nineteenth century, but later than the date for the Pearson Site. It was also pointed out that the diameters of the Watson Site beads fell between the small seed beads from the late sites (2.0 - 2.5 mm. in diameter) and the larger Pearson Site (2.0 - 4.0 mm. in diameter, but with a large majority falling between 3.0 and 4.0 mm.). The white seed beads from the Morgan Jones site are without exception of compound structure, and the seed beads in general range between 2.5 and 4.5 mm., even larger than the Pearson Site specimens. Thus, if the observations of Ray and Jelks hold true, the Morgan Jones Site should be earlier than the Watson burial. These data, coupled with the date for the cinch buckle, suggest strongly that the Morgan Jones interment occurred

after 1790, but before the first third of the nineteenth century had passed.

The people dominant in the Panhandle-Plains during that period were the Comanche, who by 1750 had pushed the Apache to the south and who held their own against the Anglo-Americans into the 1870's. The flexed position, burial furniture, and choice of a small, inaccessible rockshelter for a grave conform well with known Comanche burial practices (Newcomb, 1961: 172-173; Newcomb, 1955: 197). It seems extremely likely that the individual buried at the Morgan Jones Site was a Comanche.

Barbara Butler of Southern Methodist University examined and described the skeletal material (See Appendix). She determined that the burial was a young female, thirteen to fifteen years of age. No cause of death was apparent.