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THE WEST TEXAS NEWSLETTER

MIDLAND ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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JUNE, 1968

MIDLAND, TEXAS

Meeting Notice:

DATE: Tuesday, July 2
TIME: 7:30 p.m.
PLACE: Midland Room, Midland National Bank
PROGRAM:

A Message from the President . . .

Article II of our By-laws states: "The object of this Society shall be the encouragement of interest in the archeology of the West Texas region and to find, preserve, study, and record the material remains of past cultures." It is fun and easy to find and preserve, but it requires work and effort to study and record. The key word is record--the meaningful end product of all the rest. In keeping with Article II, the Executive Committee agreed to make an all out effort to help Mr. Saxe finish and record his Midland County project, excavate and record a suitable site (Dr. Spires will try to locate the site) and to ask the members to make short preliminary reports on a site or sites that they are familiar with. The majority of the sites in this area will never be excavated or do not lend themselves to excavation. The available data on these sites should be recorded in some form. When enough of these are forthcoming, we can edit and publish them. If each member will do one site, we will have made a significant contribution to West Texas archeology. Doug Denton has agreed to be our new editor. I wish to thank him for undertaking the job and for donating the time it takes to do it.

According to the By-laws, dues must be paid by the July meeting to remain on the membership roll.

For those who admire Catlin, the Book Stall has an \$18.50 book-- "George Catlin and the Old Frontier"--on sale for \$4.95.

Ed Kennedy

NOTES ON SOME HISTORIC INDIAN ARTIFACTS FOUND

NEAR OZONA, TEXAS

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The purpose of this brief article is to call attention to several groups of historic Indian artifacts found near the town of Ozona, in Crockett County, Texas. Three metal arrow points from the vicinity of Sheffield, Texas, are also described. The materials from the Ozona vicinity are in the Crockett County Museum in Ozona, while the metal arrow points from Sheffield (Fig. 1, a-c) are in the collection of the Fox family of Ozona.

Two historic Indian burials have been found on ranches west of Ozona in recent years. On the J. W. Henderson Ranch, a burial was found under a ledge, the ends of which had been rocked in. Accompanying the burial were well over 100 tubular glass beads (all about 7 mm. in diameter and 6 mm. thick); most of these are dark blue in color, though some are light blue or white. A heavy incomplete oval bracelet of brass wire was found. It is about 3 inches long and bears a number of notches on both sides of the gap. According to notes with the collection, 13 other brass bracelets were found with the burial.

On the Noelke Ranch, another burial has been found. Eight brass wire bracelets were associated with the burial; of these, seven are incomplete ovals, with the diameter of wire being about 4-5 mm. They are similar to specimens illustrated by Ray and Jelks (1964:136) from the Watson Site. The eighth wire bracelet is a complete oval, with a small chain of three or four links hanging from it. Also with the burial were nine tubular "hairpipe" beads, ranging in length from 3 to 6 inches. They are white in color and are highly polished. They appear to be made from conch columellae (possibly of west Indian origin), a material from which these items were mass-produced in the early 19th century (Ewers, 1957:29-86). Newcomb (1955: 189-199) has illustrated hairpipes from the Yellowstone house Canyon burial. Though he identifies the material from which they are made as tone, they, too, seem to be made from conch columellae.

Southwest of Ozona, in the Pandale area of northern Val Verde County, a group of 13 brass wire bracelets (about 3 inches long) were found with a burial at "Bee Cave" in 1937. From the notes with the specimens, it seems possible that "Bee Cave" is the same as Murrah Cave, a site excavated by Holden in 1937. But Holden found no burials or historic materials (1937: 48-73), and this would suggest that the two sites are not the same, and that

"Bee Cave" is only somewhere in the immediate vicinity. In any case, the excavations at "Bee Cave" (by local ranch people) uncovered nine burials, one of which was accompanied by the 13 brass bracelets mentioned above. Kirkland (1942: 61-71) has reported numerous historic Indian artifacts, including brass wire bracelets, to "renegade Apaches" operating in the vicinity in 1879.

On the Henderson Ranch, west of Ozona, a cache of historic Indian artifacts has been found (Max Eppler Collection). The cache items include nine brass wire bracelets (each about 3 inches long, with the wire being about 4 to 5 mm. in diameter), two metal arrow points with long narrow blades and serrated stems (Fig. 1, d), and a fragment of a rat-tail file.

Three metal arrow points have been collected from the surface of a site in Independence Creek near Sheffield. Two are complete (though the tip of the longer specimen is bent), and the distal tip is missing from the third. The complete specimens are 41 mm. and 55 mm. long, with maximum widths of 13 mm. and 14.5 mm. The broken specimen is 39 mm. long, and has a maximum width of 18 mm. All are illustrated in Fig. 1, a-c. Other metal arrow points have been reported, though not described, from a collection in the Ozona area (Clark, 1967: 247).

This article has noted several groups of historic Indian artifacts from the Ozona, Texas, vicinity. None of the artifacts are diagnostic of any tribe, and both Commanche and Apache groups are known to have been in the area in the 19th century. The materials discussed in the present paper should be more fully studied by persons conducting research in the area and further discoveries of historic Indian burials in the region should be investigated by archeologists.

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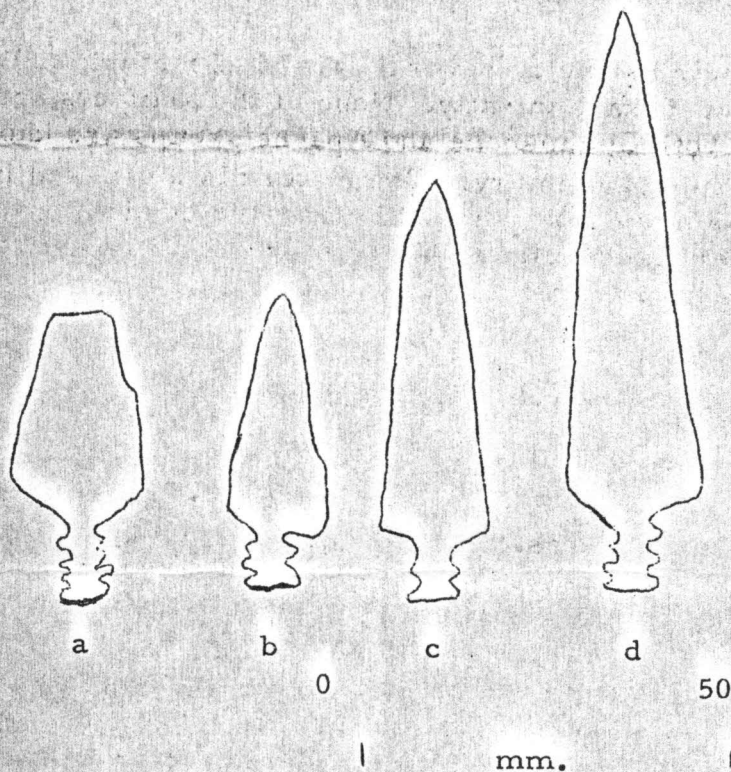


FIG. 1 METAL ARROW POINTS FROM
SHEFFIELD AND OZONA, TEXAS.

a-c: Sheffield vicinity

d: Henderson Ranch cache, Ozona vicinity