

A CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY OF THE CITY OF BRENHAM  
WASTEWATER EXPANSION PROJECT IN CENTRAL  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, TEXAS

Antiquities Permit 2940

by

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Contract Report 106

2002

A CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY OF THE CITY OF BRENHAM  
WASTEWATER EXPANSION PROJECT  
IN CENTRAL WASHINGTON COUNTY, TEXAS

Brazos Valley Research Associates

Project Number 02-14

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## **ABSTRACT**

A Phase I cultural resources survey for a proposed wastewater treatment plant expansion project (8.5 acres) in the corporate limits of Brenham, Texas was performed by Brazos Valley Research Associates in August 2002. The presence of one abandoned house, three vacant house sites, and ten mobile homes, and various storage sheds, cattle pens, and barns have contributed to the overall disturbance of the project area. The frame house was moved to its current site from its original location approximately 20 years ago. It is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or for listing as a State Archeological Landmark.

The area was investigated with a backhoe, and no significant archaeological sites were found. Other than recent historic trash on the surface, the only cultural materials observed were two 20th century medicine bottle fragments that probably washed down the creek from an existing landfill located upstream. All backhoe trenches were dug to clay. It is recommended that construction be allowed to proceed as planned. Copies of the report are on file at the Texas Historical Commission (THC), Archeological Division; the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) on the University of Texas campus; Brazos Valley Research Associates (BVRA) ; and the City of Brenham.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Brazos Valley Research Associates is grateful to the following individuals for their assistance during this project. City of Brenham employees Kyle Dannhaus (Assistant City Manager) and Lowell Ogle (Regulatory and Environmental Manager) are thanked for their participation. The City provided a backhoe and operator and other logistical support throughout the project. Timothy W. Robertson, P.E. of O'Malley Engineers in Brenham provided the maps used by the survey crew. Ed Baker of the Archeology Division, THC, reviewed the report. Jean Hughes, Assistant Curator of Records, at TARL conducted the records check. The field crew consisted of James E. Warren (Project Archaeologist) and Art Romine. The figures in this report were drafted by Lili Lyddon of Lyddon Illustrations of LL Technical Services in North Zulch, Texas.

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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Brenham plans to expand its wastewater facility adjacent to an existing site on a 8.5 acre tract in the corporate limits of the City of Brenham in a residential area in central Washington County, Texas (Figure 1). The proposed construction plans calls for removal of all structures. Next, the area will be scraped, and the elevation of the south end will be lowered in order to allow for construction of the improvements. Lastly, a wastewater treatment plant will be constructed in the re-contoured area. The project area is bounded on the north by Hog Branch, on the south by Old Chappell Hill Road, on the east by Don Austin Lane, and on the west by Farm-to-Market 577 (Horton Street). The project area map (Figure 2) was created from an engineering map prepared by O'Malley Engineers, and is depicted on the 7.5' U.S.G.S. topographic quadrangle Brenham, Texas dated 1963 and photorevised 1989 (Figure 3).

Washington County is one of the earliest areas in Texas to be settled by members of Austin's "Old Three Hundred" who arrived in the 1820s. Washington County is one of the original counties of Texas, was created in 1836 and organized in 1837, and named after George Washington. The town of Brenham became the county seat in 1844. The topography of the county consists of rolling prairies of sandy loam drained by the Brazos River and its tributaries. No soils book was available for Washington County at the time of this study.

Because the project area is located adjacent to an apparent dependable source of water (Hog Branch) in a region known to contain significant archaeological sites, the site of the proposed wastewater treatment plant was considered likely to contain evidence of prehistoric and/or historic sites. Therefore, a Phase I cultural resource survey was required by the THC. In order to satisfy this requirement, the City of Brenham retained BVRA to perform the archaeological survey which was carried out on August 26, 2002 under Antiquities Permit 2940. The Principal Investigator for this project was William E. Moore.

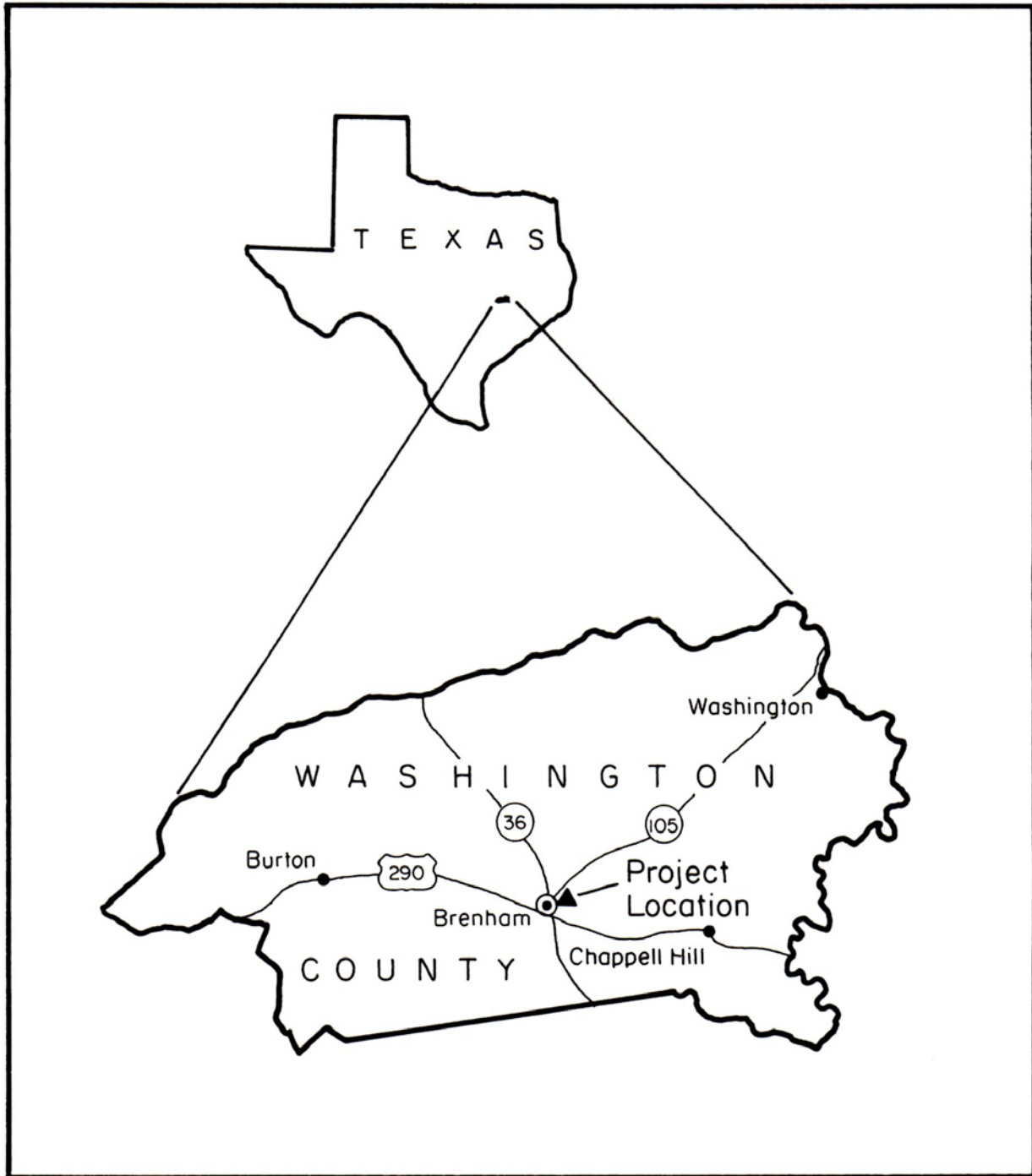


Figure 1. General Location Map

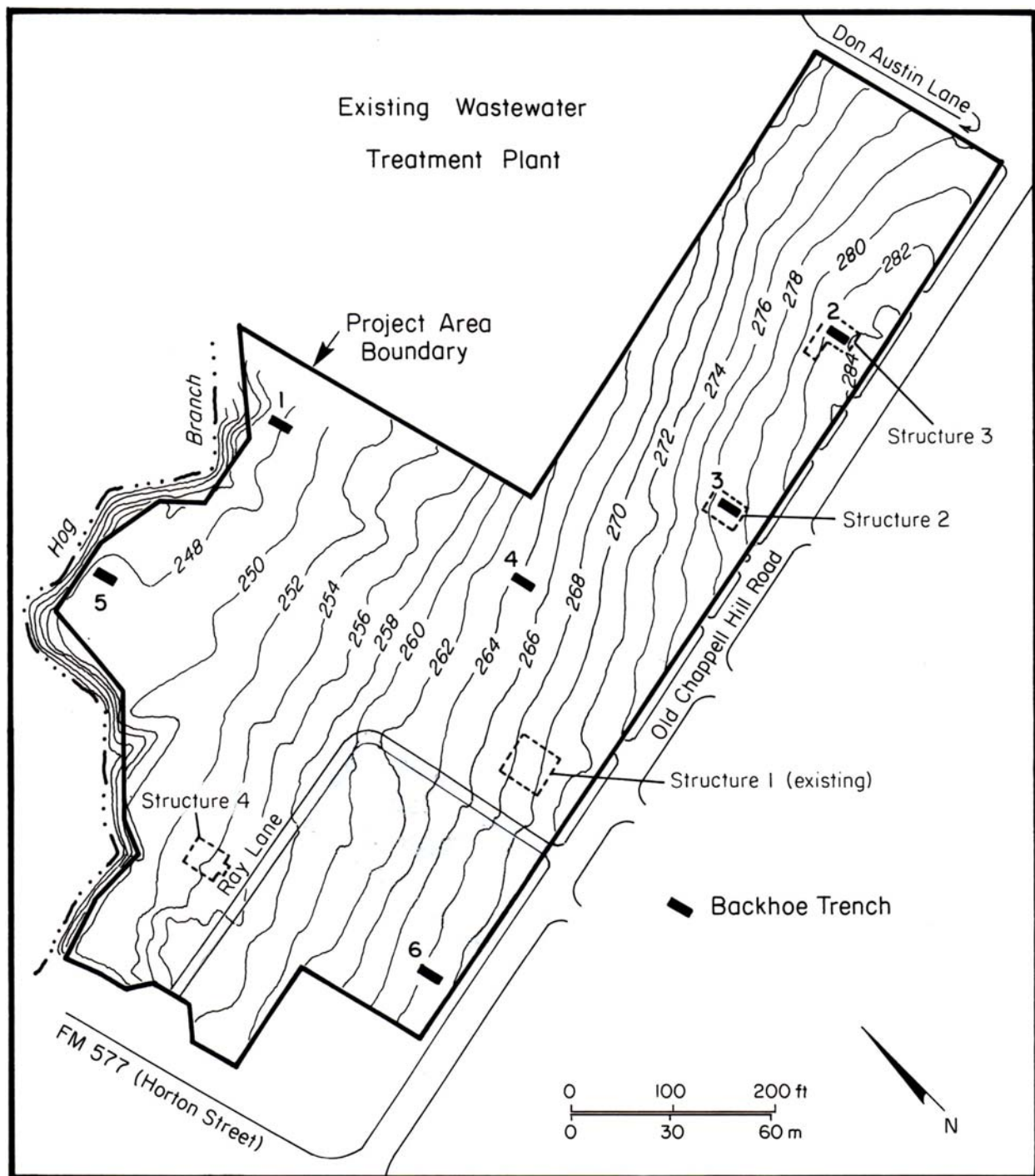


Figure 2. Project Area Map



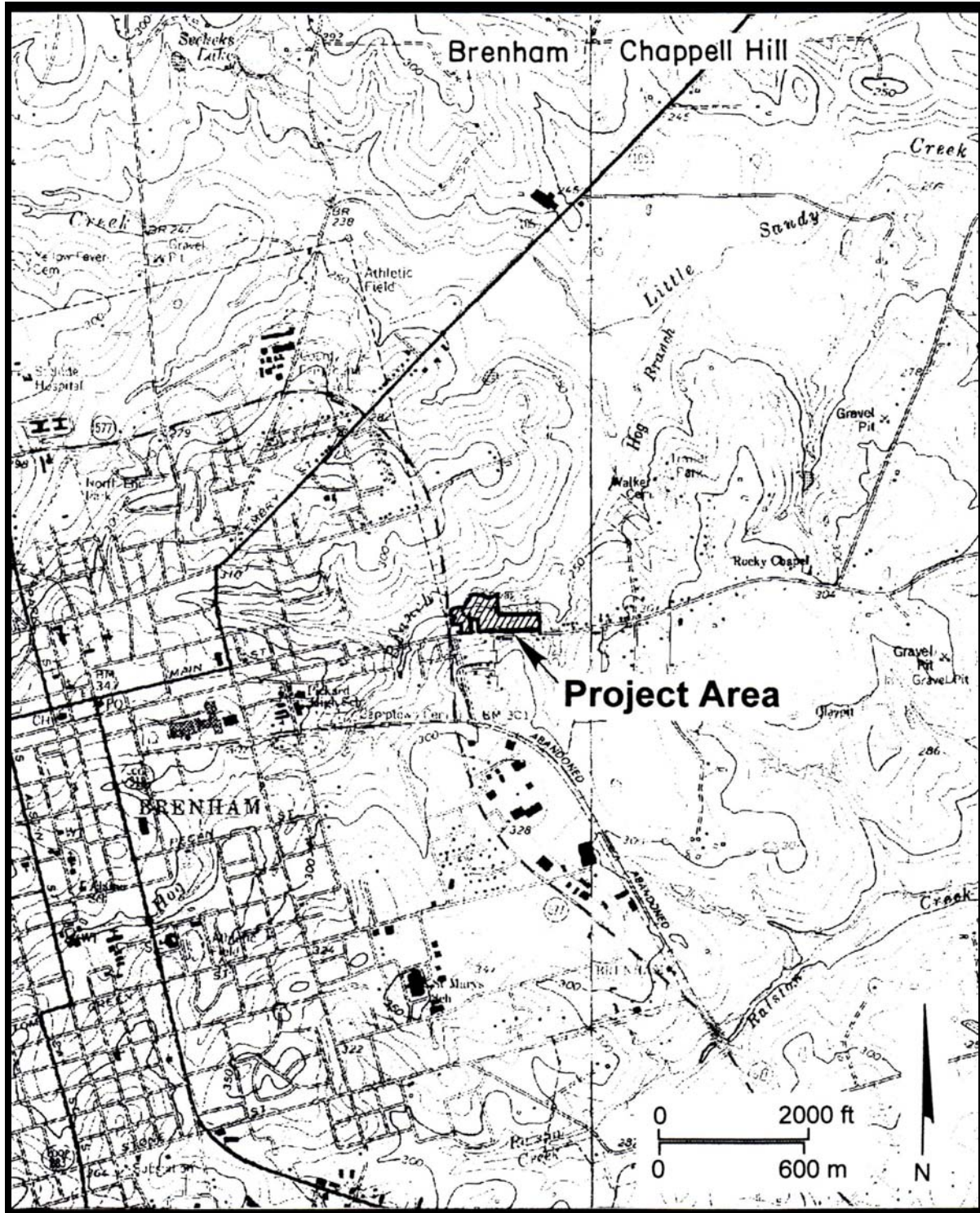


Figure 3. Project Area Depicted on Topographic Map

## PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

Washington County is located in the Central and Southern Planning Region as defined by the THC (Mercado-Allinger et al. 1996). This region is divided into smaller units, and Washington County (based on this division) belongs to the Central Coastal Plains Archeological Region (Mercado-Allinger et al 1996:Figure 1.1.4). It is only one county removed from the Central Texas Archeological Region to the north and borders the Southern Coastal Corridor Archeological Region to the south. No sites in Washington County listed as significant or critical appear in the Planning Document prepared by the THC. However, due to its proximity to other regions it is likely that Washington County shares cultural traits with its neighboring counties. According to a statistical overview prepared by the Office of the State Archeologist (Biesaart et al. 1985), there were only 16 sites recorded in the county in 1985. At that time, the number of sites in the county represented only .08% of the total for Texas. In 1985, 8 sites in Washington County were listed as Archaic and 8 were listed as Late Prehistoric, and all 16 sites experienced some form of disturbance

A background check at TARL in Austin, Texas revealed that Washington County has a relatively low number of documented archaeological sites (n=68) as compared to other counties in the state. Most of these sites have been recorded as the result of salvage work at Lake Somervell or during oil and gas related projects. Other sites have been recorded by individuals such as Nathan L. Winfield, Jr. who recorded 41WT7 - 41WT11 and 41WT13. The majority of the remainder of sites in Washington County have been recorded or evaluated by Espey, Huston & Associates, Inc. (41WT42 - 41WT47; 41WT60; 41WT65), Prewitt and Associates, Inc. (41WT25 - 41WT29; 41WT33 - 41WT40; 41WT48 - 41WT55; 41WT63 - 41WT64), the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (41WT62), Texas Archeological Salvage Project (41WT1 - 41WT4) Texas A&M University (41WT17 - 41WT18), and the United States Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (41WT30 - 41WT31). The earliest record of professional archaeological activity in Washington County was at Boggy Creek where Dee Ann Suhm and Rudolph C. Troike of the University of Texas visited the area and assisted Nathan L. Winfield, Jr. in a survey of this area in 1955 (Hasskarl 1961). Three areas containing cultural materials were examined; the Central Midden site, the South Knoll site, and the Creek site. Later, they were recorded together as 41WT12. In the Central Midden site arrow point types *Perdiz* and *Scallorn* were found in the top level mixed with dart point types *Gary*, *Morrill*, and *Palmillas*. Although *Gary* points were found in all levels, only the lower levels contained *Kent*, *Pedernales*, *Edgewood*, *Ellis*, *Ensor*, and *Yarbrough*. The Central Midden site and the South Knoll site contained an abundance of fresh water mussel shells and are described by Hasskarl (1961:298) as shell middens. The Creek site contained hearthstone fragments in addition to mussel shell. Unidentifiable ceramics were found at the Central Midden and Creek sites. Faunal remains from the three areas include mussel shell, deer, and antelope. Based on the records check at TARL, this is the only site in Washington County that has been tested. Since valuable subsistence and chronological data were obtained from this project, researchers are advised to consult this article for additional information.

## METHODS

Prior to entering the field, the Principal Investigator contacted TARL and requested a records check in order to identify any previously recorded archaeological sites in the project area and immediate vicinity. According to Jean Hughes, no sites have been identified in the current project area.

The field survey was conducted utilizing the pedestrian survey method supported by backhoe trenching. The only trenches containing soil suitable for screening were those yielding sandy loam in the upper levels. Soil from trenches 4-6 would not pass through the 1/4" screen. Trench 4 consisted of only 20 cm of sandy loam over red sandy clay, trench 5 contained 30 cm of tan silt over black clay, and trench 6 contained 90 cm of dark gray clay loam over red clay. Six backhoe trenches were placed on all types of landforms present in the project area (Figure 2) such as the floodplain (n=2), hillside (n=2), and top of hill (n=2). The project was documented by project notes and a backhoe trench log (Appendix I). The backhoe trenches were sketched in the field, and they are reproduced as profile drawings in Appendix II to this report.

At the time of the field survey there was one abandoned wooden frame house of pier and beam construction. This house is not in its original location, having been moved there approximately 20 years ago. Its age is unknown. Although BVRA did not view it to be architecturally or historically significant, photographs of all four elevations of this structure were taken with a digital camera so its significance can be assessed by the Architectural Historian at the THC (Appendix III). Timothy W. Robertson of O'Malley Engineers, Inc. in Brenham stated that there were three additional frame houses in the project area at one time. Two of these were moved prior to the field survey. The third one burned, and the site was cleared with a bulldozer.

Also present in the project area were ten mobile homes. They are not architecturally or historically significant and are less than 50 years old. In addition, there were storage sheds; cattle pens; small barns; and cement slabs that were used as patios, porch slabs, or driveways for mobile homes. No photographs of the mobile homes or other features were taken.

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

No prehistoric archaeological sites were found within the 8.5 acre project area. The six backhoe trenches revealed a variety of soil types. No fine sandy loam was encountered, although silty loam was found in four of the trenches. The project area is viewed by BVRA to be low probability for the presence of significant prehistoric sites due to the lack of deep sandy soils found through backhoe trenching and the fact that much of the project area is on a hillside.

At the time of the survey there was one abandoned frame house (Figure 2; Appendix III) and ten mobile homes in the project area. The house, located at 1901 Old Chappel Hill Road (Ray House), is not in its original location as it was moved to the current project area about 20 years ago according to Lowell Ogle, Regulatory and Environmental Manager for the City of Brenham (personal communication to William E. Moore, October 3, 2002). The age of the house is not known. Two of the mobile homes were inhabited, and the remaining eight were abandoned. The Ray House is viewed by BVRA as lacking architectural and historical significance. There were also the footprints of three additional houses that were once present in the project area. The Hubert House (House 2) was never owned by the city and was relocated prior to this survey. The Thomas House (House 3) was owned by the city, but was moved to another lot prior to this survey. The last house (House 4) was never owned by the city. It burned and was bulldozed prior to this survey. In addition, there were several cement areas that served as patios, porch slabs, and/or driveways for the mobile homes as well as storage buildings and sheds, cattle pens, and barns in the project area. Table 1 depicts the existing structures and features present in the project area.

Much of the project area has been disturbed by the construction and installation of these homes, as well as a residential road (Ray Lane) that services some of the residences to the west of the project area (Figure 2). Recent historic trash is very common throughout the project area in the vicinity of the current and former residences.

One bottleneck and one almost complete bottle were found in Backhoe Trench 1. They were quite deep and may have been deposited in a layer of tan silt below a layer of dark gray sandy loam. The silt was found to be between 160 and 210 cm below the existing surface of the Hog Branch floodplain. The bottle fragments were not collected. No other historic artifacts were observed in this trench in either layer. The two bottle fragments are medicine bottles that were sealed with a cork. They date from the latter part of the 19th century to sometime in the 20th century. According to Lowell Ogle, Regulatory and Environmental Manager for the City of Brenham (personal communication, August 26, 2002), numerous old bottles have been found in a city landfill located upstream. It is believed that the two bottle fragments found by the survey crew were washed downstream from the landfill and deposited in the project area.

Table 1. Structures in the Project Area

Structure Number	Description
1	Ray House (never owned by City), sold by previous land owner, existed when surveyed
2	Hubert House (never owned by City), relocated prior to survey
3	Thomas House (owned by City), relocated to another lot prior to survey
4	House 4 (never owned by City), burned and demolished prior to survey
5	Trailer House, relocated prior to survey
6	Storage Building, demolished prior to survey
7	Trailer House, relocated prior to survey
8	Trailer House, existed when surveyed
9	Trailer House, existed when surveyed
10	Trailer House, existed when surveyed
11	Trailer House, existed when surveyed
12	Trailer House, existed when surveyed
13	Portable Metal Storage Building, existed when surveyed
14	Trailer House, relocated prior to survey
15	Storage Sheds, Cattle Pens, Small Barns, Feed Rooms - all existed when surveyed
16	Trailer House, existed when surveyed
17	Trailer House, existed when surveyed
18	Travel Trailer, existed when surveyed
19	Carport, existed when surveyed
20	Trailer House, existed when surveyed
21	Trailer House, existed when surveyed
22	Storage Shed, existed when surveyed
23	Storage Shed, existed when surveyed
24	Storage Shed, existed when surveyed
25	Storage Shed, existed when surveyed

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

No significant archaeological sites were found during this cultural resources survey. Therefore, it is recommended that the City of Brenham be allowed to proceed with construction as planned. Should, however, cultural materials be identified in areas not discussed in this report, all work should cease until the situation can be evaluated by the THC, BVRA, and the City of Brenham.



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Mercado-Allinger, Patricia A., Nancy A. Kenmotsu, and Timothy K. Perttula

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Moore, William E.

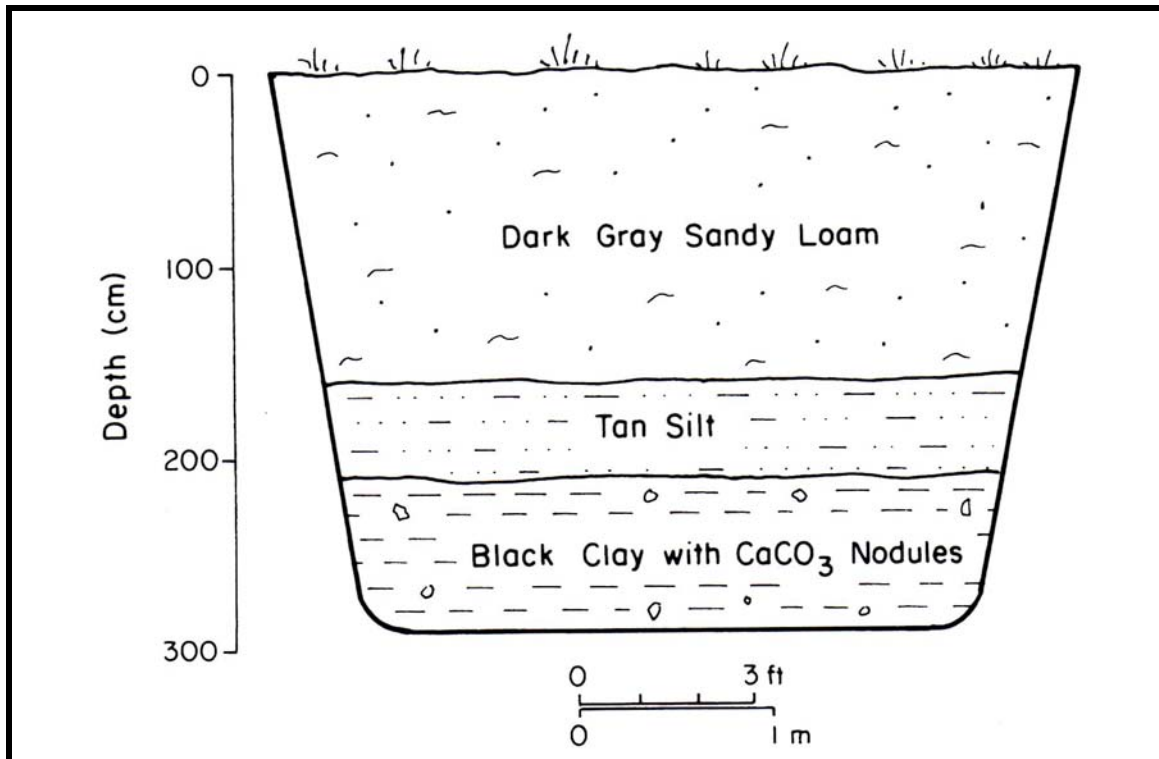
- 1988 *A Bibliography of Archaeological Reports Prepared by the Contract Laboratory, Texas A&M University*. Brazos Valley Research Associates, Bibliographies in Archaeology Number 1.

## APPENDIX I - BACKHOE TRENCH LOG

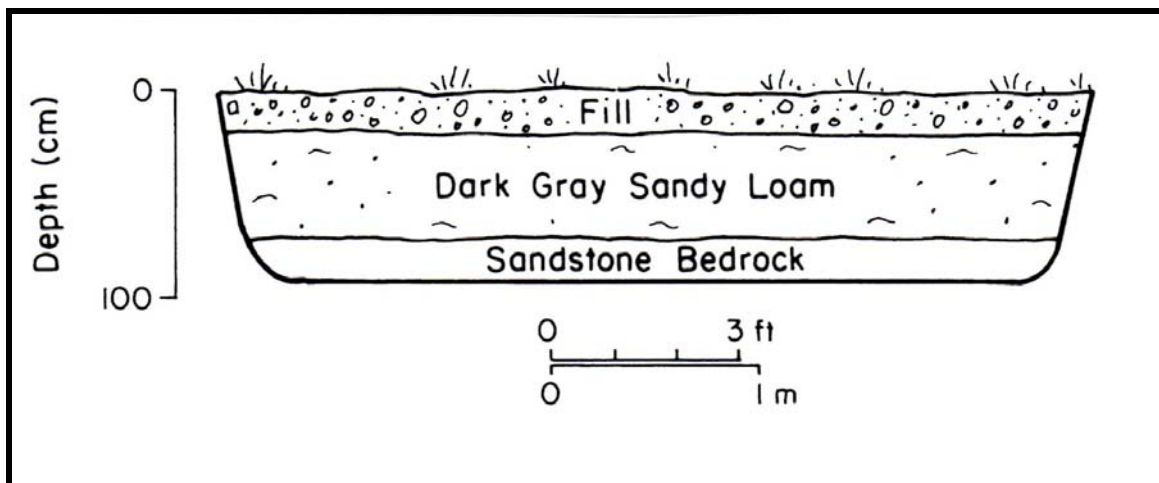
Trench	Depth	Size	Results
01	290 cm	14' x 110 cm	black clay at 210 cm
02	70 cm	14' x 160 cm	sandstone at 70 cm
03	220 cm	15' x 120 cm	gray clay at 150 cm
04	140 cm	16' x 140 cm	red sandy clay at 20 cm
05	230 cm	15' x 140 cm	black clay at 30 cm
06	170 cm	14' x 130 cm	red clay at 90 cm



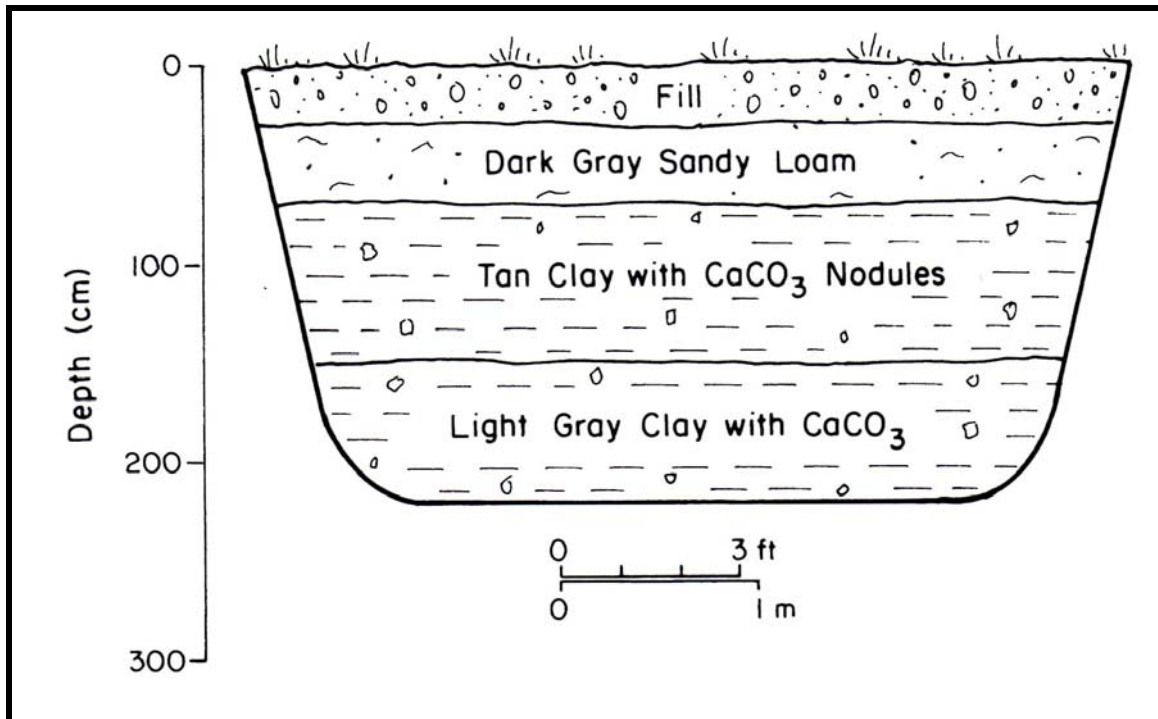
APPENDIX II  
BACKHOE TRENCH PROFILES



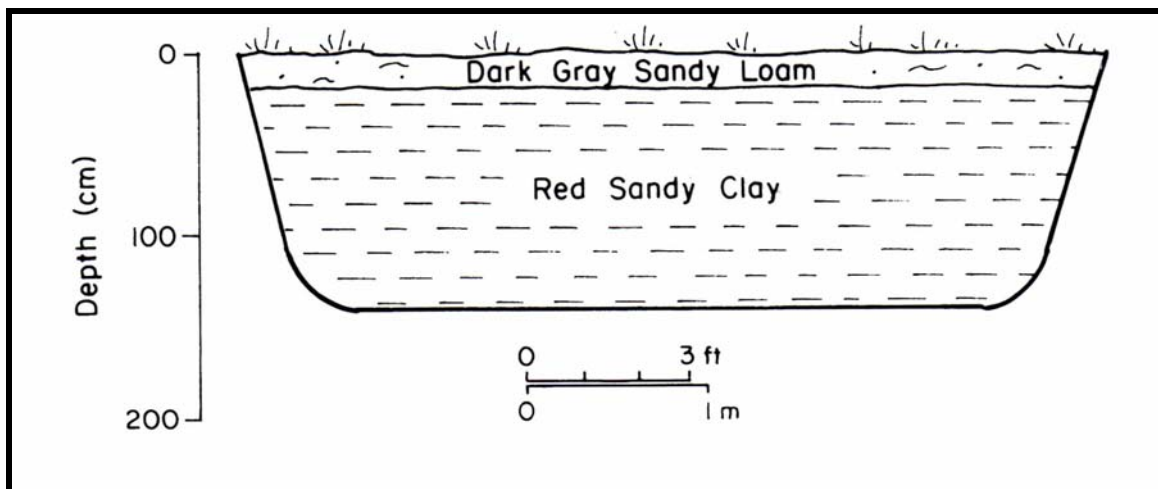
Backhoe Trench 1



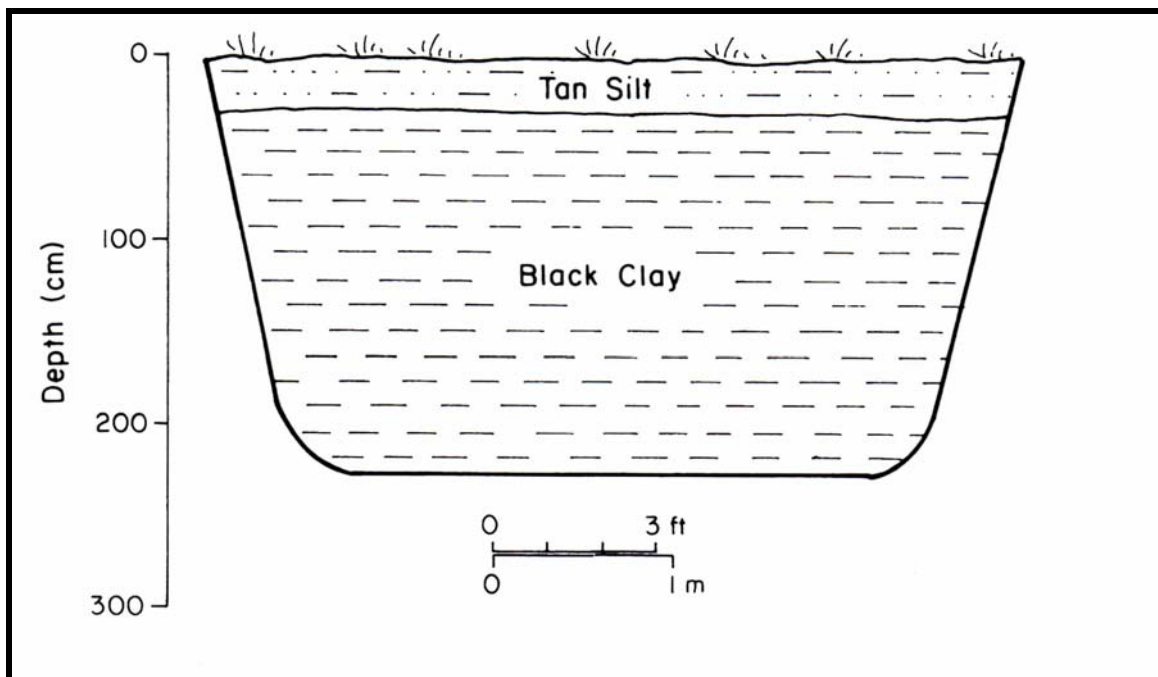
Backhoe Trench 2



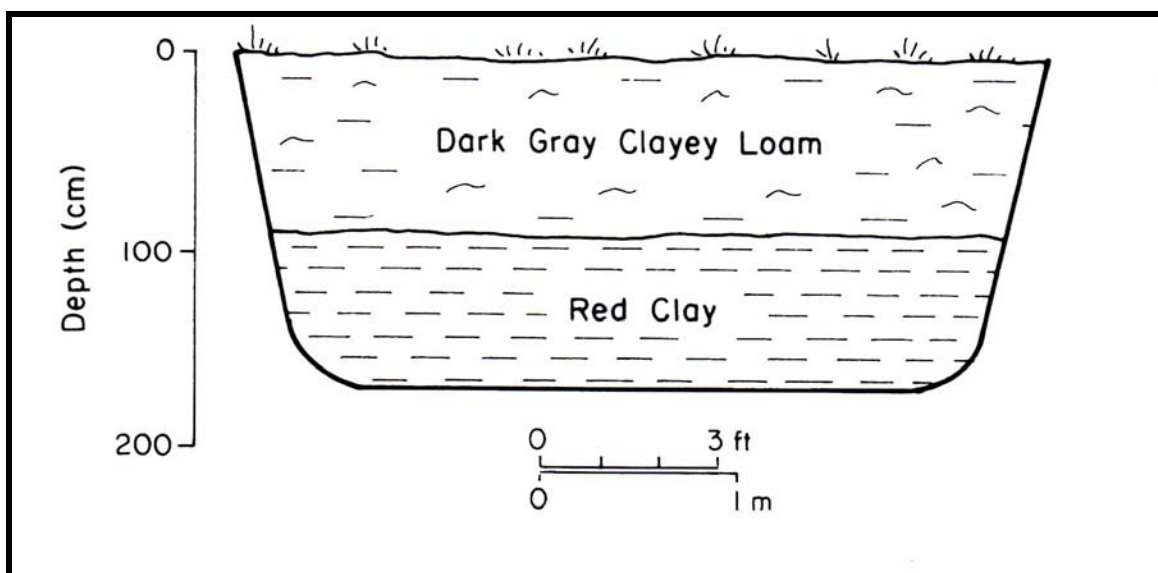
Backhoe Trench 3



Backhoe Trench 4



Backhoe Trench 5



Backhoe Trench 6

### APPENDIX III

#### HOUSE ELEVATION PHOTOGRAPHS



Ray House (Structure 1): South and West Elevations



Ray House (Structure 1): West and North Elevations