

Archeological Investigations at Mission Espíritu Santo (41GDI), Goliad County, Texas

by

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Archaeological Report, No. 356
Center for Archaeological Research
The University of Texas at San Antonio

with an Appendix by
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Excavation of Aranama Mound Located Immediately West of the Yard of Aranama (Espíritu Santo) Mission

Archival Series 3
Texas Archeological Research Laboratory
The University of Texas at Austin

Prepared for
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, Texas

IAC No. 145673

Texas Antiquities Committee Permit No. 3593

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Appendix A

Excavation of Aranama Mound Located Immediately West of the Yard of Aranama (Espíritu Santo) Mission, on the East Bank of San Antonio River, 1½ Miles S.E. of Goliad, in what is now Goliad State Park, Goliad County, Texas. One-half Mile N. of La Bahia Mission.

**Excavated July 19 to August 14, 1933
By A. T. Jackson and Crew**

Anthropology Dept. University of Texas Austin

**J. E. Pearce – Head of Dept.
A. T. Jackson – Field Foreman**

[Minimal formatting and grammatical changes to A. T. Jackson's original manuscript have been made. In some cases, when artifacts could be relocated, new photographs of the artifacts have replaced originals. Several sketches of artifacts recovered by the Goliad crew have been reproduced as they appear in the original manuscript. Figure numbers and captions have been added and referenced in the text. Handwritten notes that appear on the original (presumably added by Jackson) have been included in this reproduction.]

Appendix A: Excavation of Aranama Mound

A. T. Jackson

The mission was founded by Padre Antonio Margil, a Franciscan, in 1717 in what is now Victoria County, Texas, and moved to its present location in 1749. Tribes of Indians at the mission were: Taranames, Tamiques, Piquianes and Manos de Perro. The latter name means "hands of the dog." Mission named for Taranama Indians.

The mound was built up on the sloping side of the second terrace from the river channel. The western edge of the mound is approximately 100 yards from the river. The eastern edge is bounded by the western wall of the stone fence that encloses the mission. It would thus seem that the Indians, during the mission period, lived just outside the mission confines.

The length of the mound from east to west is slightly over 85 feet; the width, north to south, approximately 75 feet; height at tallest point, $11\frac{2}{3}$ feet. Of this elevation, 7 feet represent a natural knoll [Figure A-1].

Surface potsherds, flint chips and occasional artifacts are present around and within the mission yard; but are much

more abundant on the mound. Among the surface finds on the mound were a metal arrowpoint, handle from a vessel of Indian manufacture, fragments of European pottery with glaze and painted designs, and a flint for flint-lock gun.

Since the mission environs, including the midden mound, are within the Goliad State Park, care was taken not to uproot any of the trees in the work of excavating [Figure A-2].

Midden Finds

A piece of glazed ware, perhaps the bottom of European cup, came from midden deposit 12 feet west of the pipe (Photo 395-B [photo could not be located]). In blue was imprinted a potter's mark, or other label, as follows:

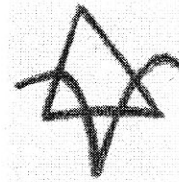


Figure A-1. Midden mound just outside the yard of Aranama Mission, and about 300 feet from San Antonio River. The midden deposit was built up on a natural elevation or hillside. Courtesy TARL, UT-Austin, photo 41GD1-4.

Among the miscellaneous small articles found in the midden are a small copper wire with a loop at one end; a brass button the size of our 5¢ piece; molded lead balls; sheet brass; metal gouge or awl; square nails; a few small blue glass beads (the latter found by Goliad crew).

According to agreement entered into between U. of T. and Judge J. A. White, the latter representing the Goliad Park, the two were to furnish crews that would keep all finds separately, each to keep what found. The U. of T., however, was to be permitted to take notes and photograph all finds of importance made by the local Goliad crew.

At a depth of 12", near the central part of the outer (western) edge of the mound were two large fragments of sheet copper. One was roughly circular, 5" to 5½" in diameter; the other was 26" long and ranged in width from 3" to 6". Near one end of the strip is a patch of the same material, bradded in place. These fragments perhaps come from a large copper vessel.

At a depth of 28" was a bar of hammered copper some ½" wide, ¼" thick, and 4" long. It was sharpened at one end and battered at the other, apparently having been used as a chisel.

Two small fragments of stones, rubbed smooth on one side, came from near the surface of the mound. These seem to have been from metates; despite the fact that the Solis Diary of 1767 states that the mission Indians here did "not make tortillas for want of metates with which to grind the corn and of comales "(earthen pan)" in which to cook it. Both of these articles are very scarce, each metate costing twenty-five pesos" (from the Solis Diary of 1767, translated by Rev. Peter P. Forrestal, Preliminary Studies of the Texas Catholic Historical Society, page 14, Austin, Texas).

An old spur, minus the rowel (and of course the straps) came from southwest edge of the mound at a depth of 5".

A brass finger ring, with six small blue sets (3 on each side) and a large central set of transparent glass-like materiel, was found at a depth of 20". It is tarnished, but in a good state of preservation [Figure A-3].

Metal hook, or door latch, from 26" depth. Resembles a fishhook, except has no barb.

A small mussel shell pierced for hafting.



Figure A-2. Excavation of the midden around trees. Courtesy TARL, UT-Austin, photo 41GD1-5.



Figure A-3. Brass ring with blue and transparent sets. Courtesy TARL, UT-Austin (no catalog number).

Brass buttons, about size of our dime, with an eye at back.

Needle-like article of silver or nickel shaped as follows:



Goliad Crew

Depth 2". Probably part of decoration of a priest.

At a depth of 8", in N.W. edge of the mound, was discovered a small, thin coin or button top. It bore no superscription or design of any kind on one side; this, coupled with its extreme thinness, causes a question as to whether or not it was a coin. On the stamped side, encircling the head of a man, appeared the following: "JOSEPH US II". No date was visible. The specimen seemed to be made of copper or bronze (found by Goliad crew). It was slightly smaller than our dime.

At a depth of 8" in the extreme S.W. edge of the mound was a small brass crucifix, with six glass sets.

A metal trigger-guard, bearing an engraved design, came from the midden deposit near the pipe later described (Photo 395-A [photo could not be located]).

The gold-plated top of a button came from the same portion of the midden.

Several small pieces of mica were discovered in the deposit.

A piece of red ocher some 3" x 2" x 1½", with a depression worn in one side, came from a depth of 10" in S.W. part of the mound [Figure A-4].

Flint scrapers were fairly common in the deposit. Some were of the "duck-bill" or end-scraper type, while others were made from thin flakes merely by some secondary chipping along one or both sides.

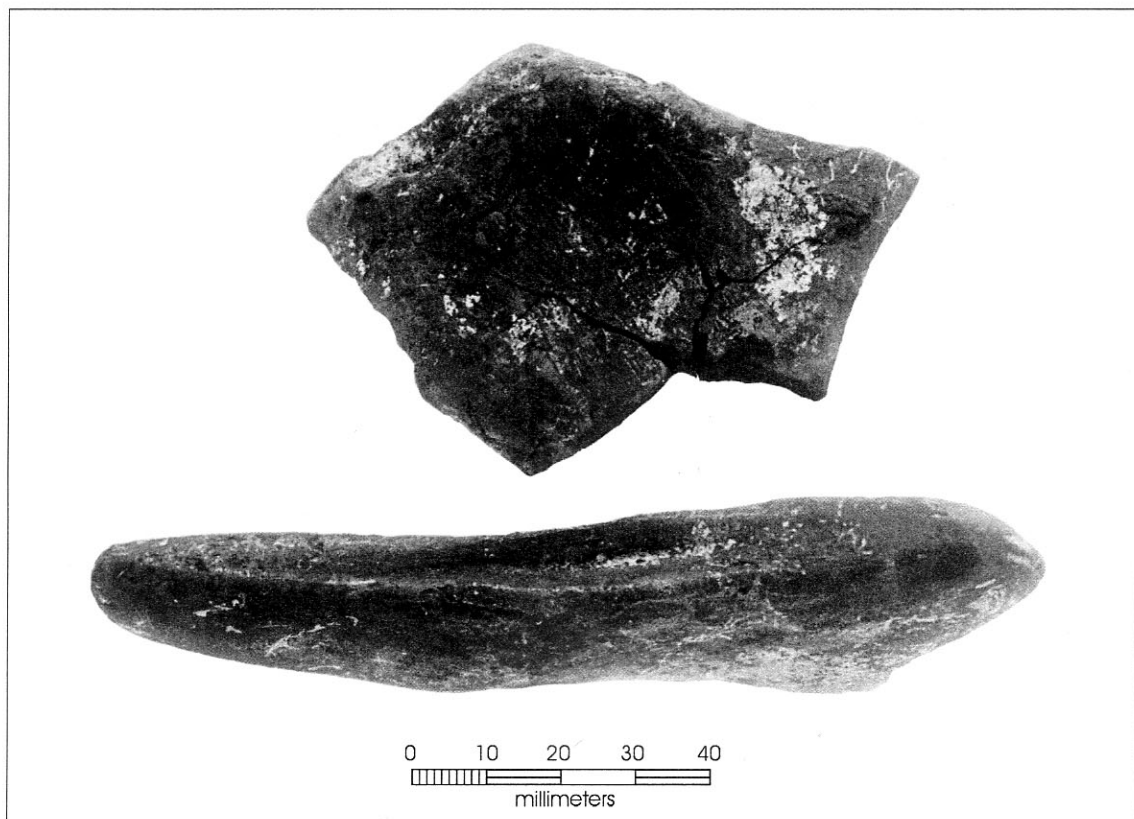
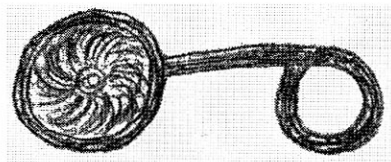


Figure A-4. Red ocher showing depressions worn by grinding powder for use as paint. Courtesy TARL, UT-Austin, photo 41GD1-46.

But the tiny flint scrapers, such as are found along the coast (Webb Island, Nueces Co., for instance) and at San Rosario Mission, two miles S.W. of Goliad, are very scarce at Aranama (Espíritu Santo) Mission.

From a depth of 12" came two small metal "powder-spoons." They lay side by side in the central part of the mound about 20 feet from the western edge. They were of about the following shape and size:



(Found by Goliad crew)

At several places in the northwestern part of the midden were small chunks of lime plaster bearing a coat of red paint. They came from depths of 6" to 11". The remains of a similar plaster may still be seen at two spots on the wall of the mission. One of these, on the unroofed wall where it is exposed to sun, wind and rain, is white and shows no trace of red paint. The other spot of plaster, in the N.W. corner of the south room and from 6" to 18" above the dirt floor, is better protected from the weather and still retains a dim to deep red color, several shades darker than that recovered from the midden deposit.

This, then, would seem to be the origin of the painted plaster excavated. Perhaps when the red plaster scaled from the wall, the Indians' love of red caused them to take the flakes as charms or good luck pieces. Or possibly they chipped the plaster from the wall. Or it may have been gathered up with the mission rubbish and piled on the refuse heap. (See samples from midden and from the mission wall.)

The badly rusted blade of a butcher knife was found on the bottom of the mound, at a depth of 47", 23½ feet inward from the center of the western edge. This, together with similar finds, seems to show that the entire mound was built up during the mission period.

An identical knife blade came from a depth of 20" and 6 feet northward.

A bone bead 2¼" long and ⅛" in diameter was at a depth of 14" in S.W. corner of mound. The ends were ground smooth.

Half of a pair of small scissors were dug out from a depth of 15".

Eleven gar scales were found at a depth of 18". But since they were together and showed no evidence of having been worked, it is not likely that they were used for arrowpoints—as was sometimes the case on the coast. Later, three other gar scales that seemed to have been ground around the edges came to light. It is possible that they may have been used as arrowpoints.

A large glass bead (¾" long and ¼" in diameter) was found 21 feet inward from western edge and near central part of mound (Goliad crew). Bead came from a depth of 24".

From a depth of 26", and 22 feet inward from western edge near center, came an unusual type of chain. It seemed to be of iron and consisted of three solid bars 1" long and ⅜" wide, with a hole ⅛" in diameter drilled at each end, and small rings ¼" in diameter inserted in the holes to bind the bars together. A fragment of a longer chain (found by Goliad crew). Another of four links from depth of 25" found by U. of T. crew.

An extremely thin sheet of copper was uncovered at a depth of 41" and 23 feet inward from central-western edge.

The preserving qualities of copper were illustrated by the finding of a cloth-covered button from a depth of 16", with the cloth preserved by the copper.

In one case, a fragment of sheet copper was bent around a cow rib, with the result that the bone bore a green color.

Several flakes (about 1" x 1½" x ¼") of gypsum came from the midden deposit at depths near two feet.

An amusing specimen was a badly corroded Jew's harp of the small size. It was discovered at a depth of 42" and about 22 feet inward from the central-western edge of the mound. Although it probably was secured, along with other trinkets, from the Spaniards at the mission, the find calls to mind accounts of early traders who brought in large supplies of Jew's harps, beads, pipes, etc., for exchange with Indians for furs, etc.

A leather boot heel was at a depth of 25", about 20 feet inward from the southwest corner of the excavation.

A few small glass beads were screened from the dirt about 3 feet from the boot heel. Blue and white in color. Depths 3" to 12".

At a depth of 15" was unearthed what appeared to be a copper or brass celt, made from some engraved article of European manufacture. It is 1½" long and 1" wide, ground at one end (and on only one side) to a cutting edge, with the other end slightly rounded.

A flint knife, 2⁵/₈" long, was discovered at a depth of 4". The scarcity of flint knives here is accounted for by the presence of steel knife blades.

The bottom from what seems to have been a small chinaware cup bore a mark, in red, as follows: [florete shaped].

A piece of "metal-cloth" 7¼" long and 1¼" wide was uncovered at a depth of 10". It has a selvage along each edge that suggests its use in some such manner as for a belt, hat or head band. The strip or band is of a fairly coarse weave and seems to have had a thin copperized covering applied after woven. This covering of metal is to be seen in the form of a thin coating of green. The copper covering tended to preserve the cloth (found by Goliad crew but presented to U. of T.).

A small mano or rubbing stone came from a depth of 16" in the midden. Another at 43".

A number of so-called bone crushers, chipped from flint, were found at various depths [Figure A-5].

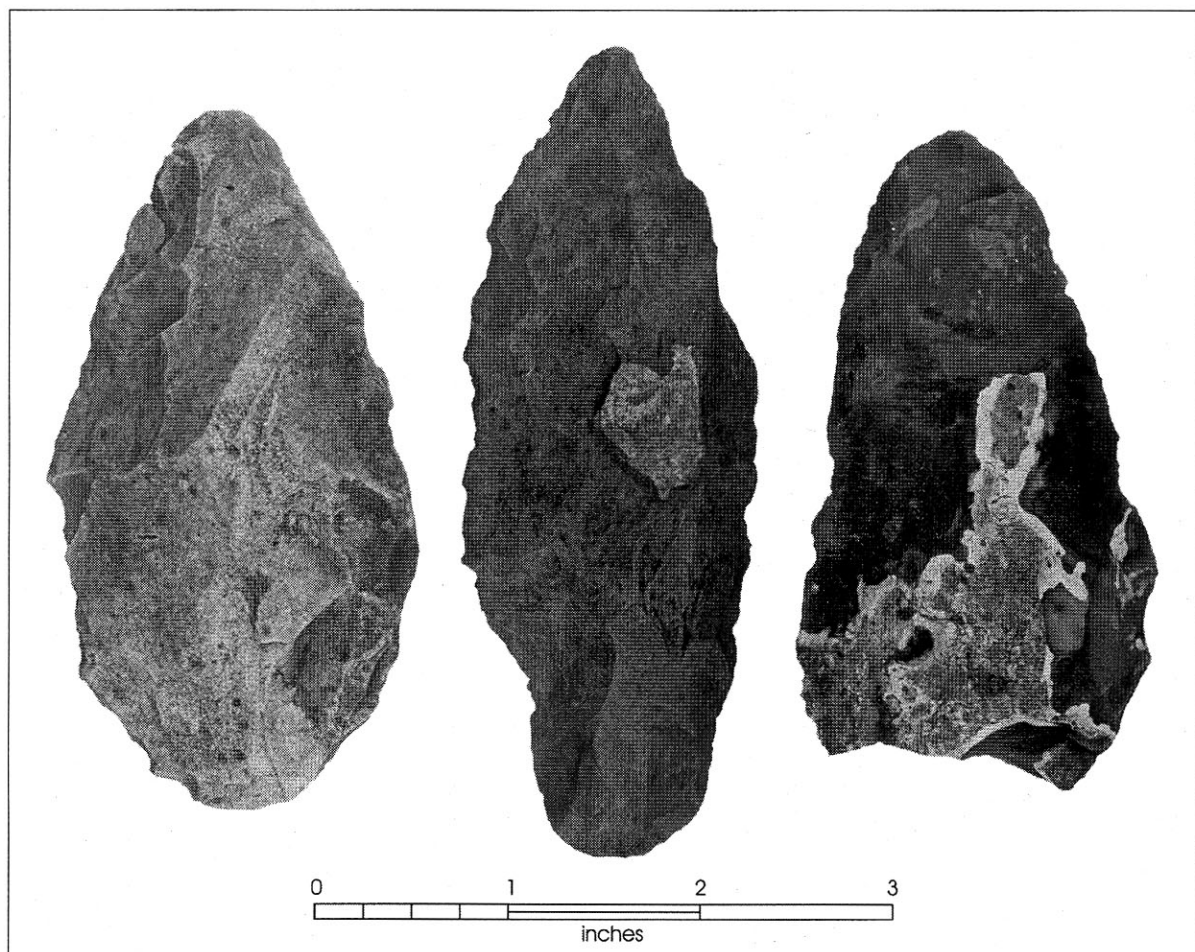


Figure A-5. *Flint bone crushers or crude axes.* Courtesy TARL, UT-Austin, photo 41GD1-55.

A brass strip (bearing engraved design) from a gun came from a depth of 12" at the northern edge of the mound.

A small Spanish "tear-cup" came from a depth of 38". It has a part of the bowl missing but can be reconstructed. It is 1½" high and about 1" in diameter.

A small shell pendant or bead made from freshwater mussel shell was shaped as follows: [see Figure A-6]. It bore two drilled holes near one edge. Found at a depth of 10". Another found by Goliad crew.

Shell beads of various kinds [Figure A-7].

Another rusty butcher knife blade came from a depth of 32" in southern edge of mound.

Eleven additional trade beads were found in southern part of mound at depths ranging from 22" to 25". The colors are red, white and blue.

Some 50 lumps of red and yellow ocher, most of which showed no evidence of having been ground on for making paint, were found in the north-central part of the mound at depths ranging from 15" to 36".

A shell bead of the type included in A. R. Shearer Collection in Anthropology Department Museum from Chambers County, Texas, was found (by Goliad crew) at a depth of

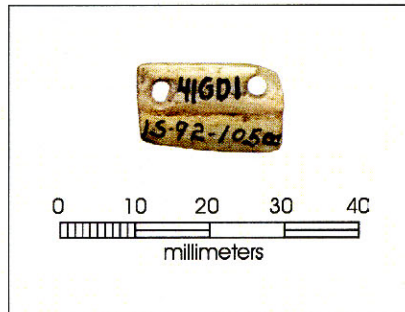


Figure A-6. Pendant or bead made from freshwater mussel shell. Courtesy TARL, UT-Austin, cat. number 1S-92-105A.

15". *Panoma* or *Olivia* shell. A long bone bead, like one previously reported, came from a depth of 4". Also the point of a bone awl. (Both of latter found by Goliad crew.)

Flint knives were shaped as follows: [see Figure A-8].

Miscellaneous finds in northern part of mound were:

- Four-pronged fork
- Engraved buckle
- Copper disc, with hole in center
- Gun hammer
- Gunflint [Figure A-9]
- Mano stone, small
- Bone crusher
- Bone bead 4⁹/₁₆" long

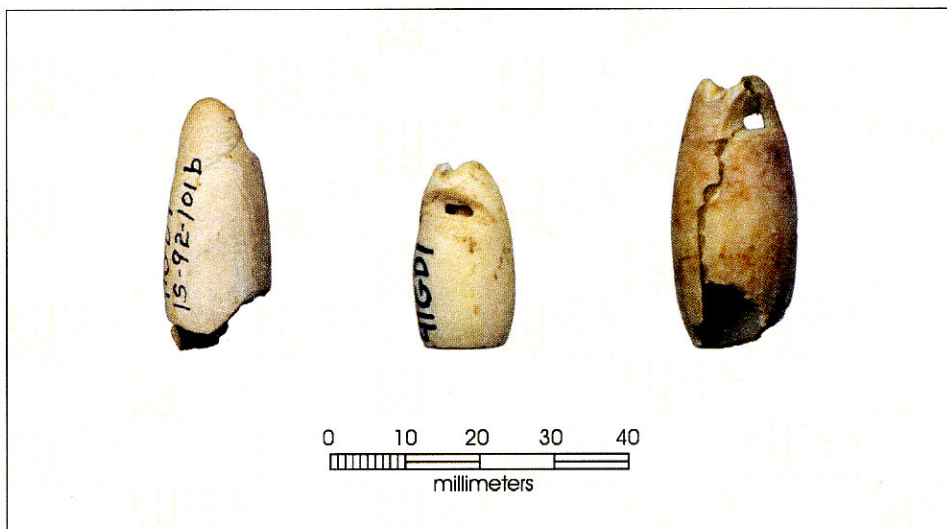


Figure A-7. Shell beads recovered from midden. Courtesy TARL, UT-Austin, cat. numbers, left to right, 1S-92-101B, -101C, -101E.

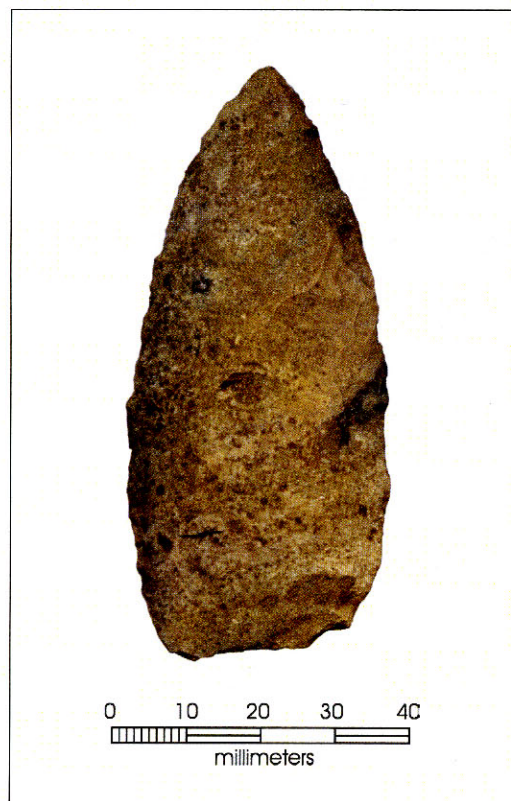


Figure A-8. Flint knife recovered from midden. Courtesy TARL, UT-Austin, cat. number 1S-92-28A.

Goliad crew:

- End of bone awl
- 2 *Panoma* shell beads

Two buttons bearing eagle such as on U.S. Army buttons. One says (on back) "Waterbury Button Co."; other reads "Scovill Mfg. Co., Waterbury". Found at depth of 6" in northern part of mound (Goliad crew). Another found by U. of T. crew.

The mouthpiece of a trumpet or bugle came from a depth of 8" (Goliad crew). Another Jew's harp, slightly larger than other and in somewhat better condition. Found at depth of 18" (Goliad crew).

Miscellaneous small finds in southern part of trench were: arrowpoint; scrapers; spoke shaves; flint knives and gouge; small brass pendant with blue glass set, depths 3" to 21". Hand-hammered copper hook. A fragment of a long, square pestle or grinding stone of volcanic rock came from 20" in south edge of mound. It is 4" long and 2" square.

A tiny copper container, with about the same capacity as a tablespoon, but with a band bearing holes for attachment to wall, came from 26", northern edge.

Copper hooks, that appear to have come from rims of vessels, were found at various depths. They bear a flat base, with two holes for bradding to vessel rim, are curved and have a slightly sharpened and rounded end to the hook—resembling modern clothes hooks used in closets. The copper hooks probably served to fasten a circular wire and bail by which the vessel was suspended.

More than half the flint scrapers are of the end type, many of them long and narrow. Some are circular and used all around. Others are side scrapers.

At a depth of 16" near center of mound was the torso of a small figurine saint. Arms and head broken off; also below waist. Spanish origin. Length 1¾"; width across shoulders 1½". Black inside and red outside; no tempering material. The figure has a cape or mantle over shoulders (Goliad crew).

A small straight pin, with a head slightly larger than our modern brass pin, came from a depth of 24", in south edge of mound.

From a depth of 15", near center of the mound, came a well-made bone awl 3⅞" long, ¼" thick and of an average width of ½". In the large or butt end is a notch ⅛" deep. The implement seems to have been made from the cannon bone of a deer. Bone awl 3" long from depth of 3", south edge of mound. The sharp end of another bone awl came from a depth of 12" in south edge of the mound. These bone awls are thicker, the points are not so sharp nor are they as well polished as the awls from Site #1 Seminole Canyon, Val Verde Co., TX (see Bul. 3327 U. of T.).

Two additional fragments of pestle stones of volcanic material came from 10" and 25" in south edge of mound.

A fragment of a watch case of the closed-face type came from a depth of 33".

A freshwater mussel shell roughly chipped to a point at the small end suggests its use as a spoon. It came from a depth of 17" in south edge of mound.

From a depth of 6" was uncovered a small silver coin (about the size of our dime). On one side was a coat of arms, still



Figure A-9. Gunflints of various sizes recovered from midden. Courtesy TARL, UT-Austin, cat. numbers, left to right, (top) 1S-92-69B, -70T, -69D, (bottom) -69C, -70P, -69A.

very legible, and encircling it was, as nearly as can be deciphered, the following: "Hispana Ind. R.M." On the other side was a superscription accompanied by the following: "Dei Gratia Carolos III" [Figure A-10a].

Two extremely thin, circular, coin-like objects (found by the Goliad crew) were much like one previously described, except that the wording was different. These two had small hole punched in center of each—perhaps for converting them into beads. On one of them was: "D.G. Rex"; on the other one was: "I.C. Relc", also head. Depths 30" and 26".

A metal dagger or knife, with a part of the wooden (?) handle intact, came from a depth of 26", in south part of mound.

A brass breast pin with 4 sets came from a depth of 18". A round lead medallion with a hole at edge and bearing a coat

of arms, came from a depth of 32". A large iron door key, 6½" long, came from a depth of 36"; and was exchanged to Goliad crew for short pieces of fiber cordage.

The cordage, from a depth of 31", was of the 4-strand braided type of workmanship. Seems to have been made from a large fiber or grass-like material. The combined length of three fragments is 5". Possibly lechuguilla fiber, but that plant does not grow here. The fiber is larger than that of the Spanish dagger which grows locally. The fiber may be from local bull nettle plants.

A number of long bone beads, or possible pipe stems, came from depths ranging from 25" to 44". They vary in length from 2⁵/₈" to 4³/₈" and are about ¼" in diameter. They were cut and smoothed at the ends. They appear to be from bird bones [Figure A-11].