Cultural Resources Survey at
Old Velasco Townsite, 41BO125
Brazoria County, Texas

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CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY AT OLD VELASCO TOWNSITE, 41BO125 BRAZORIA COUNTY, TEXAS

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Abstract

At the request of Port Freeport and the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District, PBS&J has conducted a cultural resources survey of a portion of Old Velasco (41BO125), a historic townsite at the current location [redacted] Brazoria County, Texas. Initially settled by Stephen F. Austin in the 1820s, Old Velasco became an important coastal port and military outpost during the 1830s and early years of the Republic of Texas, but declined during the mid-nineteenth century and was eventually abandoned by the late 1870s. The purpose of the survey was to identify potential impacts from the proposed widening of the Freeport Harbor Ship Channel pursuant to Permit 23752 (COE-VD and Port Freeport). Fieldwork for the project was carried out from October 20 through 22, 2008, under the direction of Michael Nash, Principal Investigator, with the assistance of Historical Archeologist Andrea Stahman.

In total, five trackhoe trenches measuring approximately 60 feet (18.3 meters) long by 2 feet (0.60 meter) wide were excavated to an average depth of 7.4 feet (2.2 meters). Two of the trenches were intentionally placed within historically documented building locations associated with the early Texas town of Old Velasco. As a result, two historic features were identified, one possible builder's trench and one posthole. A sample of the fill within the possible builder's trench was hand excavated and screened through ¼-inch mesh, and the fill surrounding the posthole was also investigated by hand.

Features 1 and 2 represent the remains of historic-aged construction within the project area. However, neither contained diagnostic artifacts from the Old Velasco occupation that could offer significant research value. Also neither is unique among the features previously identified at the site; in fact, Feature 2 is 1 of over 300 postholes identified and recorded at 41BO125 (Earls et al. 1996:xvi). Based on their position below the historic cultural zone and their morphology, features 1 and 2 may be associated with buildings or outbuildings connected to the 1838 Velasco Exchange. The lack of diagnostic artifacts makes dating either feature uncertain. Since evidence suggests that the data potential from further investigation of these features is low, the Principal Investigator recommends cultural resource clearance for this project.

I. INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Brazos River Harbor Navigation District (BRHND or Port Freeport) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (USACE), PBS&J has conducted a cultural resources survey of a portion of Old Velasco (41BO125), a historic townsite at the current location of Surfside, Brazoria County, Texas (Figure 1). Initially settled by Stephen F. Austin in the 1820s, Old Velasco became an important coastal port and military outpost during the 1830s and early years of the Republic of Texas, but declined during the mid-nineteenth century and was eventually abandoned by the late 1870s. The purpose of the survey was to identify potential impacts from the proposed widening of the Freeport Harbor Ship Channel pursuant to the Clean Water Act Section 404 and Rivers and Harbors Act Section 10 Permit 23752 (COE-VD and Port Freeport) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800), as amended. Fieldwork for the project was carried out between October 20 and 22, 2008, under the direction of Michael Nash, Principal Investigator with the assistance of Historical Archeologist Andrea Stahman.

The proposed widening of the ship channel will include dredging along the existing north Freeport Harbor Jetty Channel, which will impact a stretch of shoreline where the remains of a portion of archeological site 41BO125, otherwise known as the Old Velasco townsite, are assumed to be located (see Figure 1). This area of potential effect (APE) measures approximately 1,250 feet (ft) in length and ranges from less than 5 ft to about 65 ft in width, averaging about 40 ft (Figure 2).

A portion of the proposed APE is subsumed by the Old Velasco archeological mitigation area investigated by Prewitt and Associates, Inc., in the early 1990s (Earls et al. 1996). The mitigation area encompassed the eastern half of Block 11 and the northeastern portion of Block 12 of Old Velasco's original plat. Figure 2 shows the location of the archeological mitigation area as well as the original blocks of Old Velasco within the APE. Historically documented building locations within these blocks are also shown on Figure 2.

In a meeting with the Texas Historic Commission (THC) on October 9, 2008, the THC identified five locations where backhoe trenches should be placed. These trench locations are within the APE at loci thought to have the highest potential for the location of intact cultural resources associated with the site of Old Velasco.

Typically the APE is characterized by a subsoil base of Beaumont clay of Pleistocene age. Overlying the clay is a Holocene-aged sandy layer typically from 0.3 to 0.9 meter (m) in thickness. Overlying the sandy layer is a deposit of modern dredged material typically from 0.6 to 3.6 m in thickness. Based on results from previous archeological investigations, it was expected that intact remains associated with the historic townsite would be located either within the sandy layer, atop the clay subsoil, or possibly extending up to 0.6 m into the clay subsoil. The high water table is typically from 0.3 m above to 0.6 m below the surface of the clay subsoil. There was some potential for cultural resource features to extend below the water table.

A short distance inland from the proposed APE is a feature known as the Shoreline Protection Jetty (SPJ). It consists of a ditch about 50 ft in width, excavated to the water table and filled with large rocks that were removed from a previous jetty that was demolished during the 45-Foot Channel Widening Project in the late 1980s. The distance from the edge of the APE to the SPJ varies from less than 5 ft to about 65 ft (see Figure 2).

Because the APE is quite narrow in some areas, trenching perpendicular to the shoreline was not feasible. The channel side of this narrow strip is frequently unstable, with a cutbank up to 6 ft (1.8 m) in height that is sometimes undercut by erosion from wave scouring. An adjacent SPJ occupies the opposite edge of the APE.

II. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

PHYSIOGRAPHY

Site 41BO125 is located [redacted] Brazoria County lies within the West Gulf Coastal Plain physiographic province of Texas (Bureau of Economic Geology 1996). Regionally, the area is characterized by a nearly continuous series of marginal marine embayments separated from the Gulf by a system of barrier islands and peninsulas (Lankford and Rehkemper 1969).

The West Gulf Coastal Plain is the southern element of an elevated former sea bottom that extends along the Texas Gulf Coast northward to the Atlantic seaboard. This province is characterized by low topographic relief, elevations below 133 m, and sedimentary geologic formations deposited during the Cretaceous, Tertiary, and Quaternary periods (Barnes 1992; Hunt 1967, 1974; Sellards et al. 1932).

CLIMATE

The modern climate of Brazoria County is typically dominated by offshore weather patterns, with periods of modified continental influence during the colder months when cold fronts from the northwest sometimes reach the coast. Because of its coastal location and relatively low latitude, cold fronts that reach the area are seldom severe. Climatic conditions for Brazoria have been recorded since 1946 at three weather stations located in Alvin, Angleton, and Freeport, Texas. Monthly normal temperatures and precipitation, as recorded at these three weather stations for the period of 1971 to 2000, ranged from an average of 55 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) in December and January to above 80°F in the summer months. Minimum temperatures fall as low as 43°F and maximum temperatures rise as high as 92°F.

Monthly rainfall for this area is evenly distributed throughout the year. Average annual precipitation is about 52, 57, and 51 inches for Alvin, Angleton, and Freeport, respectively. Monthly precipitation averages range from about 2.82 to 7.80 inches. Snowfall is infrequent. In 95 percent of the winters, there is no measurable snowfall. In 5 percent, the snowfall, usually of short duration, is no more than 4 inches. The heaviest 1-day snowfall on record was more than 2 inches.

The average humidity in midafternoon is about 60 percent. Humidity is higher at night, and the average at dawn is about 90 percent. The sun shines 60 percent of the time possible in summer and in winter. The prevailing winds are from the south and southeast. Average wind speed, 10 miles per hour, is highest in March (Soil Conservation Service [SCS] 1981).

GEOLOGY

The geologic units within Brazoria County are characterized as Quaternary (Recent and Holocene) Alluvium containing thick deposits of clay, silt, sand, and gravel (Barnes 1982, 1987), overlying the

Pleistocene-aged Beaumont Formation. These materials developed mainly from stream channel, point bar, natural levee, and backswamp deposits associated with former and current river channels and bayous. The Quaternary Alluvium outcrops in a belt approximately 70 to 90 miles wide paralleling the Texas coastline. The underlying Beaumont Formation is estimated to be less than a 100 ft thick and consists mostly of clay, silt, sand, and gravel (Barnes 1987).

The project area is further characterized by the addition of recent fill and subaqueous dredged material associated with the construction of the Freeport Harbor Channel for the City of Freeport's chemical-processing complex. Typically, fill and dredged material consist of mixed mud, silt, sand, shell, and reworked dredged material.

SOILS

The *Soil Survey of Brazoria County, Texas* (SCS 1981) shows the soil series encompassing the area of Freeport, Oyster Creek, and Surfside as the Surfside-Velasco unit. The Surfside-Velasco unit is about 60 percent Surfside soils, 11 percent Velasco soils, and 29 percent soils of minor extent (SCS 1981). Surfside soils are nearly level, saline clay that forms in marshes. This soil has a surface layer of very dark gray clay about 14 inches thick. Below is a dark gray clay to 32 inches followed by a dark reddish brown clay subsoil to a depth of 72 inches. Velasco soils occur in marshes, at elevations slightly lower than those of the surrounding Surfside soils. They have a surface layer of dark reddish brown clay about 8 inches thick. From 8 to 30 inches the soil is dark brown clay, and from 30 to 65 inches it is mottled with red, brown, and gray clays. The Surfside-Velasco unit is used as rangeland and wildlife habitat. It is poorly to very poorly drained and very slowly permeable. Urban development on this soil is limited by wetness, clayey texture, high shrink-swell potential, salinity, and susceptibility to flooding. Soils of minor extent in this unit include Asa, Ijam, Harris, Pledger, and Veston soils.

As mentioned, sediments within the project APE include the subsoil base of Beaumont clay, which is overlain by a sandy layer of Holocene-aged alluvium typically from 1 to 3 ft in thickness. Overlying the sandy layer is a deposit of modern dredged material typically from 2 to 12 ft in thickness. Based on previous investigations (Earls et al. 1996), archeological remains associated with site 41BO125 may be located either within the sandy layer, atop the clay subsoil, or possibly extending up to 2 ft into the clay subsoil. The high water table is typically from 1 ft above to 2 ft below the surface of the clay subsoil.

VEGETATION

The project area is located within the Upper Coast division (Hatch et al. 1999) of the Gulf Coast Prairies and Marshes Vegetational Region (Gould 1975). This vegetational region is a nearly level plain less than 250 ft in elevation, covering approximately 10 million acres (Hatch et al. 1990). The Gulf Prairies include the coastal plain that extends approximately 30–80 miles inland. Current vegetation at what remains of site 41BO125 consists of huisache (*Acacia smallii*), blackbrush (*A. rigidula*), goatweed (*Hypericum perforatum*), bushy sea-ox-eye (*Borrichia frutescens*), dewberry (*Rubus* sp.), morning glory (*Ipomoea* sp.), and several varieties of coastal grasses (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Overview of 41BO125 with survey trenches, facing northwest

FAUNA

The project area lies within the Texan Biotic Province, as described by Blair (1950). The Texan Biotic Province supports a diverse fauna composed of a mixture of species common to neighboring provinces. Austroriparian species from the east are generally restricted to forests, bogs, and marshes. Grassland species, entering the area from the west, are generally restricted to the prairies (Blair 1950).

At least 49 mammal species occur or have occurred in the Texan Biotic Province (Blair 1950). Although terrestrial habitat is limited in the vicinity of the project area, common terrestrial mammals of potential occurrence include Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), swamp rabbit (*Sylvilagus aquaticus*), black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*), marsh rice rat (*Oryzomys palustris*), fulvous harvest mouse (*Reithrodontomys fulvescens*), hispid cotton rat (*Sigmodon hispidus*), nutria (*Myocastor coypus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), northern raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), and striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) (Schmidly 2004).

At least 16 species of lizards and 39 species of snakes occur or have occurred in the Texan Biotic Province (Blair 1950). In addition, at least five urodeles (newts and salamanders) and 18 anurans (frogs and toads) have occurred in the Texan Biotic Province (Blair 1950). Terrestrial amphibian and reptile species include Blanchard's cricket frog (*Acris crepitans blanchardi*), Gulf Coast toad (*Bufo nebulifer*), green treefrog (*Hyla cinerea*), squirrel treefrog (*Hyla squirella*), American bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*), green anole (*Anolis carolinensis*), eastern six-lined racerunner (*Aspidoscelis sexlineata sexlineata*), Mediterranean house gecko (*Hemidactylus turcicus*), western cottonmouth (*Agkistrodon piscivorus leucostoma*), western diamond-backed rattlesnake (*Crotalus atrox*), several species of watersnake (*Nerodia* spp.), Gulf saltmarsh snake (*Nerodia clarkii clarkii*), and Gulf Coast ribbonsnake (*Thamnophis proximus orarius*) (Dixon 2000). Aquatic reptile species of the Texan Biotic Province include American

alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) and Texas diamond-backed terrapin (*Malaclemys terrapin littoralis*) (Dixon 2000).

Brazoria County supports an abundant and diverse avifauna. Tidal flats, bay margins, and beaches provide excellent habitat for numerous species of herons and egrets, shorebirds, wading birds, gulls, and terns. Common species include great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*), great egret (*Ardea alba*), snowy egret (*Egretta thul a*), little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*), white ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), roseate spoonbill (*Platalea aja ja*), clapper rail (*Rallus longirostris*), common moorhen (*Gallinula chloro pus*), killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), black-necked stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*), yellowlegs (*Tringa* spp.), willet (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*), long-billed curlew (*Numenius americanus*), sanderling (*Calidris alba*), least sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*), dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), dowitchers (*Limnodromus* spp.), Wilson's snipe (*Gallinago delicata*), laughing gull (*Larus atricilla*), ring-billed gull (*Larus delawarensis*), herring gull (*Larus argentatus*), Forster's tern (*Sterna forsteri*), and least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service n.d.; Richardson et al. 1998). The mainland and barrier islands of the Texas Gulf Coast provide critical stopover habitat for numerous species of neotropical songbirds during migration.

III. CULTURAL SETTING

The project area is located in Brazoria County, Texas, which is part of the Southeast Texas Archeological Region of the Eastern Planning Region of Texas (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993). The cultural history of Southeast Texas has been assigned to four developmental stages: Paleoindian, Archaic, Late Prehistoric, and Historic. These divisions generally are believed to reflect changes in subsistence as reflected by the material remains and settlement patterns of the people occupying this portion of Texas in prehistoric and early historic times.

PALEOINDIAN (10,000–6500 B.C.)

The earliest generally accepted culture of the Americas, the Paleoindian (10,000–6500 B.C.) appears to have extended over most, if not all, of North America by the end of the Pleistocene epoch. It has been hypothesized that in Texas the Pleistocene coastline extended as much as 25 miles into the present Gulf, and that rivers cut deep canyons into sediments deposited during previous periods of glaciation (Aten 1983). With the close of the Pleistocene came a period of climatic warming and a consequent rise in sea level as surface water was released from glaciers and polar ice. Paleoindian cultural developments in the Gulf Coastal Plain, as in most areas of North America, appear to have been intimately related to these gradual but widespread changes in the world climate and local environmental conditions.

Texas Gulf Coast human occupation during the terminal Pleistocene is evidenced by the recovery of several types of well-made, lanceolate, parallel-flaked projectile points such as Scottsbluff, Clovis, Plainview, Angostura, and possibly San Patrice types. The presence of these distinctive projectile point types along the coastal plain appears to reflect activities that would typically have occurred in areas farther inland where the environment is characterized by a mixture of deciduous and pine woodlands (Aten 1983). According to Aten (1983), this type of habitat typically supports low-density human populations. Archeological evidence synthesized by Story et al. (1990) from numerous counties comprising the greater Gulf Coastal Plain in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma supports the suggestion that the Paleoindian groups probably existed in small nuclear families or bands, which migrated widely in pursuit of seasonal subsistence resources.

Archaic (7000 B.C.–A.D. 700)

Cultural developments appear to have progressed with the climatic changes of the Early to Middle Holocene. Changes in the world climate caused sea levels to rise, inland prairies to expand, and regional weather patterns to become more variable (Aten 1983). Generally termed the Archaic (7000 B.C.–A.D. 700), the next period of cultural development in the New World has been further subdivided into Early, Middle, and Late subperiods based on changes observed in the archeological record that appear to coincide with episodic shifts in the Holocene climate and environment. It is commonly thought that human lifestyles and subsistence strategies maintained patterns developed during the previous Paleoindian period, but with some notable differences.

Aten (1983) suggests that Early Archaic groups, like their Paleoindian predecessors, probably continued to migrate seasonally in small bands and relied on a generalized projectile point technology to facilitate their hunting and gathering of a variety of faunal and vegetal foodstuffs. Despite a paucity of intact Archaic components at sites in the upper Texas Gulf Coast region, it has been observed that Archaic lithic technologies show an increased diversity of functional types and styles over those associated with the Paleoindian period; however, the level of craftsmanship and the use of fine exotic materials declined. In addition, the Archaic projectile point style varieties appear to reflect more-regional cultures. Story et al. (1990) surmise that Archaic period human populations may have become more dense, with individual bands covering less overall territory on their seasonal rounds.

Differentiation between Early, Middle, and Late Archaic culture sites in the upper Texas Gulf Coastal region, without the benefit of sufficient associated cultural features and artifacts from which strong chronological dates and sequences can be derived, has been based largely on observation and comparison of projectile point styles associated with more-intact archeological contexts elsewhere in Texas and North America. The assumption has been that similar point styles are probably related chronologically despite sometimes vast geographical distances. Accordingly, Early Archaic point types are usually considered to include Baird, Bell, Andice, and Wells, whereas Bulverde, Carrollton, and Trinity points are usually attributed to the Middle Archaic. Based on a relatively greater database for defining the Late Archaic, point types considered diagnostic of this cultural subperiod typically include Gary, Kent, Yarbrough, Ellis, Palmillas, and Refugio (Patterson 1979).

The Late Preceramic, which coincides in part with the Late Archaic elsewhere in Texas, extends from the approximate period in which sea level attained its present state, ca. 2000 to 1000 B.C., until the advent of ceramic service and storage vessels, ca. A.D. 100 (Aten 1983). During this period, population increased significantly, marked by an increase in the number of sites and by an increase in intrasite artifact frequencies (Aten 1983). Hall (1981) has also noted an increase in traumatic death and the development of trade relations with Woodland cultures to the east during the Late Archaic. A settlement system, which may have included a seasonal round with group dispersal in coastal areas during the summer and consolidation in inland areas during the winter months, may have begun during the Late Archaic (Aten 1983). Projectile points diagnostic of Late Archaic occupations include Gary, Kent, Yarbrough, Ellis, Palmillas, and Refugio (Patterson 1979).

Late Prehistoric (A.D. 700–1519)

The Late Prehistoric, or Ceramic, period (A.D. 700–1519) cultures experienced a relatively static environment. This period lasted from the time when ceramics were adopted until European interaction with the aboriginal populations became firmly established.

The addition of Perdiz and Scallorn arrow points to the inventory marks the beginning of the Late Ceramic period. Ceramics of the earlier period may include Goose Creek Plain variety Anahuac, O'Neal Plain variety Conway, Mandeville Plain, Tchefuncte Plain, Goose Creek variety unspecified, and

Tchefuncte Stamped. In the Late Ceramic period, the ceramic inventory may include San Jacinto Incised and Baytown Plain varieties Phoenix Lake and San Jacinto (Aten 1983). It should be noted, however, that several varieties of Goose Creek Plain, as well as Goose Creek Incised (and Red-Filmed), and the occurrence of bone tempering, span much of the Ceramic period.

Human population during the Late Prehistoric tended to increase until European-introduced disease helped to decimate the aboriginal inhabitants. Patterson (1979) observed an increase in the number of Late Prehistoric sites, while individual sites exhibit fewer cultural remains. He interprets this as evidence of a more mobile lifestyle. Recent evidence of this increased mobility was found at site 41FB255, situated along an oxbow of the Brazos River in Fort Bend County northwest of the current project area (Rogers et al. 2000). Artifact analyses, special sampling, and radiometric dating suggest the site was occupied repeatedly during the Late Prehistoric, probably by relatively small bands or extended families. Further evidence from the site indicates that arrow point styles once thought to represent differing time periods were in use at the same time (Rogers et al. 2000).

Historic

When Europeans arrived on the northern Texas coast, they encountered two major native groups, the Atakapa and the Karankawa, who occupied separate territories divided approximately at the western shore of Galveston Bay. The Atakapa, speaking a language of the Tunican family, displayed traits closely related to the natives of southwestern Louisiana. The Karankawan groups spoke a language of the Coahuiltecan family and were more closely related to the native groups farther south in Texas and Mexico.

In spite of differences in language and apparent cultural derivation, the Atakapa and Karankawa maintained similar cultural patterns (Ricklis 1996). Both groups were nomadic, although the Atakapa maintained semipermanent winter villages in the interior. The Atakapa subsisted on shellfish, fish, birds' eggs, wild plants, deer, and bear, while the Karankawa ate shellfish, turtles, marine and land plants, alligator, deer, bison, bear, and peccary. Conical huts and skin tents served as shelter for the Atakapa, while the Karankawa lived in portable windbreak-style huts. Atakapan technology included pottery, bows and arrows, dugout canoes, basketry, traps, manos and metates, drums and flutes, wooden bowls and utensils, and grass-fiber textiles. The Karankawa also used pottery, basketry, cane weirs, milling stones, drums and whistles, tambourines, lances, clubs, axes, bone tools, and bows and arrows along with dugout canoes propelled by poles. Both groups buried their dead in burial mounds and left refuse middens, primarily shell. Both wore breechcloths and skirts and decorated themselves with tattoos. Both groups were equally unprepared to defend themselves and their cultural traditions from the newly arrived Europeans. By the late eighteenth century, both the Atakapa and Karankawa peoples were in serious decline (Ricklis 1996).

European Exploration and Colonization

European exploration of the Texas coast began, albeit by accident, in November 1528. Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca was a member of the Narváez expedition that was destined for Pánuco (Tampico), Mexico. Cabeza de Vaca and his men were plagued with misfortune when the expedition departed from Florida in April (Creighton 1975). While adrift and seeking fresh water, de Vaca's group discovered the mouth of the Brazos River, naming it Los Brazos de Dios, the Arms of God.

French exploration of Texas in the seventeenth century was focused primarily in the Matagorda Bay area. René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle traversed the Brazos River in 1686, though his journey did not take him to the river's mouth. An unfortunate malady that occurred at this time inspired La Salle to name the river the Rivière Maligne. While crossing the river on a raft, La Salle's servant Dumesnil was pulled into the water by an alligator and killed (Weddle 1991).

The Spanish conducted preliminary exploration and mapping of the Freeport area in the early eighteenth century. In 1724 Brigadier Pedro de Rivera y Villalón began a 3-year-long inspection tour of the 23 military outposts in northern New Spain (Chipman 1992; Weddle 1991). A series of six maps of northern New Spain created by Francisco Alvarez Barriero during the expedition is considered the first attempt at systematic mapping of Texas (Weddle 1991). Following this study, the Texas governor was required to conduct an annual surveillance of the coast from Matagorda Bay to the Sabine River (Weddle 1991).

Captain Carlos Luis Cazorla conducted a survey in 1772 to identify the level of trade between the local tribes and newly established English trading posts. On his return trip he traveled down the Brazos to its entry into the Gulf, near present-day Freeport. He discovered that the stream divided into two channels with a maze of lagoons. This was the first exploration of the mouth of the Brazos (Weddle 1992). Ineffectual organization and motivation prevented additional substantial exploration of the Texas coast east of Matagorda Bay. It would not be until the early nineteenth century that successful immigration to the Brazos would be realized.

Early Settlements (1800–1835)

In 1821 the governor of Texas, Antonio Martínez, granted permission to Moses Austin for the creation of Mexican colonies in Texas. After Moses's death later that year, his son, Stephen F. Austin, selected the lands for colonization. Austin organized a group of 18 immigrants that landed at the mouth of the Brazos River in late December 1821 (Bugbee 1899). Though they mistakenly landed at the Brazos River instead of the intended destination of the Colorado River, the group labored for several weeks exploring the immediate area and building seven boats for carrying their supplies upriver. In February, the party journeyed up the Brazos until the first "high land" was sighted. At this site (Velasco), a large log house was erected and preparations were made for planting a corn crop (Bugbee 1899). Asa Mitchell arrived at the mouth of the Brazos in January 1822 and opened a salt-manufacturing business (Creighton 1975). He received the title to this land in 1824 and lived in the Velasco area until moving to Washington-on-the-

Brazos in 1835, thus becoming possibly the first colonist to settle permanently at the site (Earls et al. 1996).

The advantageous location of Mitchell's land grant, at the juncture of the Brazos River and the Gulf, persuaded Austin in 1823 to propose the location as a port. Austin acknowledged, in December of 1835, that Velasco was without a natural harbor and also had a treacherous sand bar at the mouth of the river (Earls et al. 1996). Despite these drawbacks, entrepreneurs encouraged steamboat navigation on the Brazos to cater to the cotton plantations along the river. The establishment of a trading post at Bell's Landing (now East Columbia) by John Richardson Harris in the 1820s encouraged the use of the river for the trade and transportation of commodities. Harris's small schooner *The Rights of Man* may have been the first vessel specially designated for trade between the Brazos River, Galveston Bay, and New Orleans (Earls et al. 1996). The popularity of Velasco as a commercial trade center was superseded by Brazoria, 15 miles upriver, which had been established about 5 years earlier. In 1833, Mitchell formed a land association with his neighbors William H. Wharton and Branch T. Archer. This collaboration would develop Mitchell's property into a thriving river and seaport (Earls et al. 1996).

Increased immigration into Texas in the 1820s possibly encouraged Mexico to create several military outposts, one of which was established at Velasco in 1831 (Rowe 1903). Asa Mitchell was commissioned to serve as a boarding officer at Velasco by the fall of that year (Earls et al. 1996). With the establishment of the fort and customshouse at Velasco, the Mexican government attempted to forcibly regulate Brazos River traffic and exert tax and customs control. The conflicts created by these new restrictions culminated at Velasco in 1832. In response to friction between Mexican authority and the colonists, 150 men gathered to attack General Ugartechea at Velasco. The Mexican force commanded by Ugartechea was composed of 91 men. On June 26, three divisions of colonists attacked the fort until sunrise the following morning (Rowe 1903). The fort's cannon fired upon the town's structures, destroying all but the customshouse and a small office (Smith 1910). Surrender was negotiated on June 29th, in which Ugartechea's troops were ordered to withdraw (Rowe 1903).

Following the battle, Mitchell began to sell portions of his property, possibly to facilitate town rebuilding. In addition to the public sale of lots, the Velasco Association also announced construction of a major hotel to accommodate its many anticipated visitors. A nationwide cholera epidemic finally touched Velasco in the spring of 1833; only 12 of the 20 townspeople survived. This tragedy, and a diversion of town resources towards Texas's quest for independence, would quell the building initiative envisioned by the Velasco Association. Their grand designs would not again be revisited until after the conclusion of the Texas Revolution in 1836 (Earls et al. 1996).

Texas War for Independence (1835–1836)

Though Velasco was not a location of direct military engagements after 1832, it was used as a training post for Texas militia. John Sowers Brooks began drilling 250 men in late December 1835 (Roller 1906). Anticipating a military conflict with Mexico, the abandoned fort at Velasco was refortified with a long

18-pound cannon and several smaller artillery pieces (Earls et al. 1996). Though humble in appearance, the fort was described as the best coastal defense work in Texas in May of 1836 (Pierce 1969).

Velasco itself did not witness growth during the years of conflict (Earls et al. 1996); however, its location at the mouth of the Brazos River was strategically important to the movement of troops and supplies throughout Texas. The region experienced a marked increase in maritime activity during the Texas Revolution. Quintana, Velasco's competitor on the river's west bank, was also the location for the mercantile house of Thomas McKinney and Samuel Williams. This commercial house is accredited with establishing the first regular steam commerce on the Brazos and served plantation owners such as William Wharton (Puryear and Winfield 1976). It was also instrumental in providing funds and military supplies for the Texas cause (Miller 2004). Military supplies for the Texas volunteers were stored in warehouses in Velasco and Quintana (Miller 2004). Vessels transported supplies and volunteers from New York and New Orleans to both Quintana and Velasco (Brinkley 1937). These materials were then transshipped to locations such as Galveston, Matagorda, Columbia, and Copano Bay (Brinkley 1936).

Velasco was homeport to the vessels *Invincible*, *Yellow Stone* , and *Independence*. The schooners *Invincible* and *Independence* were both purchased as vessels of the "privateer" Texas navy organized in 1836 (Barker 1927; General Council 1839). The steamboat *Yellow Stone* was used by Sam Houston to transport troops and supplies across the Brazos River in April 1836 (Hardin 1992).

The surrender of the Mexican army at San Jacinto was negotiated in the Treaty of Velasco, signed at Velasco on May 14, 1836, by Antonio López de Santa Anna and David G. Burnet, ad interim president of Texas. Santa Anna was forced to stay on the schooner *Invincible* when Texas troops under Thomas Jefferson Green refused to allow his departure to Veracruz. Santa Anna spent the next several months as a prisoner at Velasco until he was moved to Columbia towards the end of the year (Miller 2004).

Texas Republic (1836–1845) and Early Statehood (1845–1862)

Following the battle of San Jacinto, ad interim president David G. Burnet selected Velasco as the location for his government offices (Winkler 1906). Velasco was never able to earn the distinction of being Texas's "first capital," as the seat of government was transferred to Columbia in October 1836 (Pierce 1969). Brazoria County was subsequently created on December 20, 1836. Velasco, Columbia, and Brazoria were incorporated in June 1837. These first few years of the Texas Republic, from 1836 to 1840, was the period of greatest development for Velasco (Earls et al. 1996).

At the close of the war, and with the resumption of port and customs activities, Velasco received renewed commercial interest. The Velasco Association reorganized and expanded its membership to include such key individuals as Jeremiah Brown and Isaac Hoskins (Earls et al. 1996). The year 1837 was both the height of land sales/building activity in Velasco and the beginning of a boom in port activity. An average of 425 persons arrived annually at Velasco in 1837, 1838, and 1839 (Earls et al. 1996). Velasco additionally had an average of 36 vessels visiting its port annually during the Republic years. The largest number of vessels to anchor at Velasco was 85 in 1838 (Earls et al. 1996).

Velasco's growth and importance as a commercial entity declined with the emergence of Galveston as one of Texas's principal ports. An analysis of commercial activity in 1839 demonstrated that even with Galveston's more-abundant maritime traffic, its export value was nearly matched by Velasco. Additionally, delayed effects of an economic depression in 1837 would impact the value of property lots, causing them to crash near the end of 1839 (Earls et al. 1996). The economic crash and the effects of recurring storms would quash Velasco's continued growth and development as a commercial center.

In an attempt to sustain Velasco's role in trade, a steam vessel, *Lafitte*, was built in 1840 to run on the Brazos between Velasco, Galveston, and the Sabine River (Earls et al. 1996). The use of the *Lafitte* for Brazos River shipping was fleeting. In 1842, with renewed hostilities with Mexico, the *Lafitte* was pressed into Texas government service as she lay at anchor in Galveston Bay (Haviland 1852). In this same year, Sam Houston spent $9,000–$10,000 fortifying the 370-mile Texas coastline at three places: Galveston, Velasco, and Matagorda (Wells 1960). The effort to reinforce and protect Texas's coast, however, did not prevent the economic demise of Velasco.

The decline in shipping at Velasco, combined with the associated hazards of its riverine access, initiated the overland transportation of goods in this area. In the waning years of the Republic period, Velasco continued to depreciate in both real estate and shipping. A major tropical storm in 1842 dropped Velasco's sea trade to only five vessels in that year (Earls et al. 1996). By the mid-1840s Velasco had digressed from its reputation as "coming city of the Gulf" to a seaside resort and mail stop (Earls et al. 1996).

In spite of the difficulties at Velasco, the Brazos area prospered in cotton and sugar. Planters transported their goods overland and shipped them from Galveston. In the 1850s a proposed intracoastal waterway between Velasco and Galveston promised to bring more commercial activity to the mouth of the Brazos. With completion of the canal in 1856, sternwheel steamers transported cargoes from Galveston up the Brazos River (Dorchester 1936). Rather than revitalize maritime commerce in this area, the waterway circumvented trade from Velasco to Galveston (Dorchester 1936). Planters continued to ship goods down the waterway to Galveston, which as a consequence bolstered the city's now undeniable reputation as a maritime trade center.

American Civil War (1861–1865)

In antebellum Texas, in the region of Houston and Galveston, the farming of cotton and sugarcane was highly profitable (Buenger 1984). Planters along the Brazos River were increasingly dependent on slave labor. In 1860, 18 of the state's 44 slaveholders resided in Brazoria, Wharton, and Fort Bend counties (Buenger 1984). Many of the planters who lived in this region were very wealthy; one-fifth of all Texans with estates valued at over $100,000 were from these three counties. These slaveholders collectively owned more than 100 slaves (Buenger 1984). The dependence on slave labor created unyielding support for secession, and an overwhelming majority of residents voted in favor of withdrawal from the Union on February 23, 1861 (Buenger 1984).

Texas itself became important as a source of military supplies for the Trans-Mississippi region of the Confederacy (Barr 1961). Federal gunboats patrolled the Texas coastline in an effort to blockade strategic waterways such as Galveston Bay and the Sabine River. Forts were erected at Quintana and Velasco (Looscan 1898). At the outbreak of the Civil War, only four Federal blockaders were operating off the Texas coast (Barr 1961). In January 1862, the ships *Midnight*, *Arthur*, and *Rachel Seaman* shelled the coastal fortifications at both Aransas Pass and Velasco (Barr 1961). The fort at Velasco fired upon the vessels with such accuracy that the captain of the *Midnight* thought the fort was defended by heavy (possibly rifled) guns. The fort had only a single piece of artillery, an 18-pounder (Creighton 1975).

Following Confederate victories at Galveston and Sabine Pass in 1863 and with Union possession of the southern half of Texas's coast, Confederate forces concentrated on holding Sabine Pass, Galveston, and Velasco at all costs. Velasco itself was so heavily reinforced, with a battery of six 32-pounders, that Federal blockaders never engaged the fort for any great length of time (Barr 1961). By late 1864 the number of cannon at Velasco had increased to 8, with Galveston having a total of 41 cannons. Blockade-running in Texas had grown to such an extent that by 1865 the blockade squadron off the Texas coast had no fewer than 20 ships (Barr 1961).

Post–Civil War and Early Industrial Revolution (1865–1910)

With the close of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, the commercial viability of Velasco and Quintana became greatly depressed. At the end of the nineteenth century Velasco had only a general store and boat-builder's shop. Only 2 of the 20 plantations in Brazoria County were still held by their prewar owners, the rest having been sold or lost to taxes (Earls et al. 1996). Storms in the late 1860s and early 1870s forced many families to move inland or leave the area altogether. The remaining Velasco lands were sold in 1872 and transferred to the Texas Land Company. With the acquisition of these properties, Velasco ceased to be a municipal entity. The great storm of 1886 and the hurricane that followed in 1887 destroyed any remaining town structures (Earls et al. 1996).

At the urging of W.M.D. Lee, Velasco was redeveloped in order to facilitate the building of a deep-water port at the mouth of the Brazos River. Lee was a Texas cattle baron and oilman. He believed a deep-water port at the mouth of the Brazos was the best way to move his cattle to market (Earls et al. 1996). In February 1888, Lee filed his charter for the Brazos River Channel and Dock Company. When construction began in April 1889, the influx of workers increased the population of Velasco from 50 residents to 700 by the end of the year (Earls et al. 1996). A new location for Velasco was surveyed and laid out in 1891, with the old site becoming the town of Surfside. Surfside was platted as a resort town, and a large beachfront hotel was built to help raise funds for the construction project (Earls et al. 1996). The Galveston hurricane of 1900 destroyed much of the Brazoria County coastline, including the hotel. A second hotel, built on its original site, was destroyed by fire in 1904 (Earls et al. 1996). These successive events destroyed any remaining impetus for the development of commercial enterprise at this location until the founding of Freeport in 1912.

The city of Freeport, Texas, was founded on November 20, 1912, upriver from the historic site of Velasco (Freeport Townsite Company 1912). The Brazos River itself was strategically important for the transportation of needed goods and supplies inland. The importance of this riverine passage to mercantile trade prompted the founding of Freeport, as well as Velasco and historic Quintana.

PREVIOUS ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

A site file and records review was conducted for the Port Freeport Harbor Channel Widening project in Brazoria County. The files at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory and at the Texas Historical Commission (THC) were both examined for the location of recorded terrestrial archeological sites, listed National Register of Historic Places properties, State Archeological Landmark sites, and Texas Historic Markers. The results of the files and literature review are presented in the following section.

Since the 1970s, professional and avocational archeologists have conducted investigations at the old Velasco (41BO125) townsite in southern Brazoria County, Texas. In 1975, Ippolito and Baxter (1976), working for the Texas A&M Research Foundation, conducted an intensive archeological survey of an area between the Brazos River Diversion Channel and the Freeport Harbor navigation channel for the USACE. One prehistoric site (41BO117) and three historic sites (41BO116, 41BO123, and 41BO125) were recorded. Excavations at site 41BO125, on the east bank of the Old Brazos River channel, revealed a large portion of a circular brick foundation and some smaller rectangular foundations that Ippolito and Baxter (1976) attributed to Fort Velasco. However, additional field work and historic research conducted in 1980 by the Center for Archaeological Research (CAR), at the University of Texas at San Antonio, indicated that these brick foundations were not part of the original Fort Velasco (Fox et al. 1981). CAR's work placed the general site of Fort Velasco within Monument Square, between the United States Coast Guard Station and Surfside City Hall (Fox et al. 1981).

Since 1981, the Brazosport Archaeological Society has been acquiring surface collections from the old Velasco townsite for the Brazosport Museum of Science (Earls et al. 1996). During the latter part of 1992 and early 1993, Prewitt and Associates, Inc., conducted site testing and data recovery at the old Velasco townsite (41BO125) for the USACE (Earls et al. 1996). Over 400 features were documented, ranging from postholes to structures. The majority of a large artifact assemblage recovered from the site supports an 1830–1840s habitation date.

IV. FIELD METHODS AND RESULTS

METHODS

Five trenches measuring approximately 60 ft (18.3 m) in length by 2 ft (0.60 m) in width were excavated at intervals within the APE as directed by the THC (see Figure 2). A mini trackhoe was used to excavate the trenches to an average depth of 2.2 m below surface, often 0.5–0.8 m below the water table and top of Beaumont clay subsoil (when present). All excavation was monitored by two professional, experienced archeologists. The backdirt was inspected for artifacts, and the side walls of each trench were visually inspected for the presence of cultural features, although the high water table caused trench walls to collapse after only a short period of time. Profile description forms were completed for each trench, and photos of representative areas of stratigraphy were also taken for each trench. All trench locations were logged using a GeoXT Trimble GPS receiver. All artifacts recovered from disturbed, secondary contexts were photo documented in the field and discarded. At times, the initial trench was widened or small areas alongside the trench were scraped to provide investigators plan views of possible cultural features.

RESULTS

The cultural resources survey was conducted from October 20 through 22, 2008, by PBS&J archeologists Michael Nash and Andrea Stahman. Portions of each trench were selected for generalized profiles of the stratigraphy. Figure 4 provides a comparative overview of these trench profiles.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated within the historically mapped location of a building determined to likely represent the 1838 Haskins Family residence (Earls et al. 1996) located at the far northeastern corner of Velasco Townsite Block 11. Trench stratigraphy was generally uniform throughout, and individual strata were easily discernible (see Figure 4, Figure 5). A layer of loamy sand (10YR 5/4) consistent with deposits previously identified within a cultural zone by Prewitt and Associates (Earls et al. 1996:11) was observed near the ground surface, but did not contain any artifacts or cultural features. Modern trash, including bits of metal and plastic, were found within the upper 10–20 centimeters (cm) of the trench.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was excavated within Block 11 but outside of any previously documented historic building. Although trench stratigraphy was largely uniform and comparable to deposits observed within Trench 1 (see Figure 4, Figure 6), areas of modern disturbance were evident at the extreme northeastern and southwestern ends of Trench 2. These disturbances were indicated by dark brown clayey deposits containing artifacts dating from the 1930s (milk glass, clear and brown bottle glass) and modern metal that extended 10–30 centimeters below surface (cmbs) into the underlying strata. Aside from these more modern items, a few isolated artifacts, including corroded bits of metal and two pieces of an underglaze hand-painted whiteware plate (Figure 7), were observed in the fine sand stratum (approximately 125–

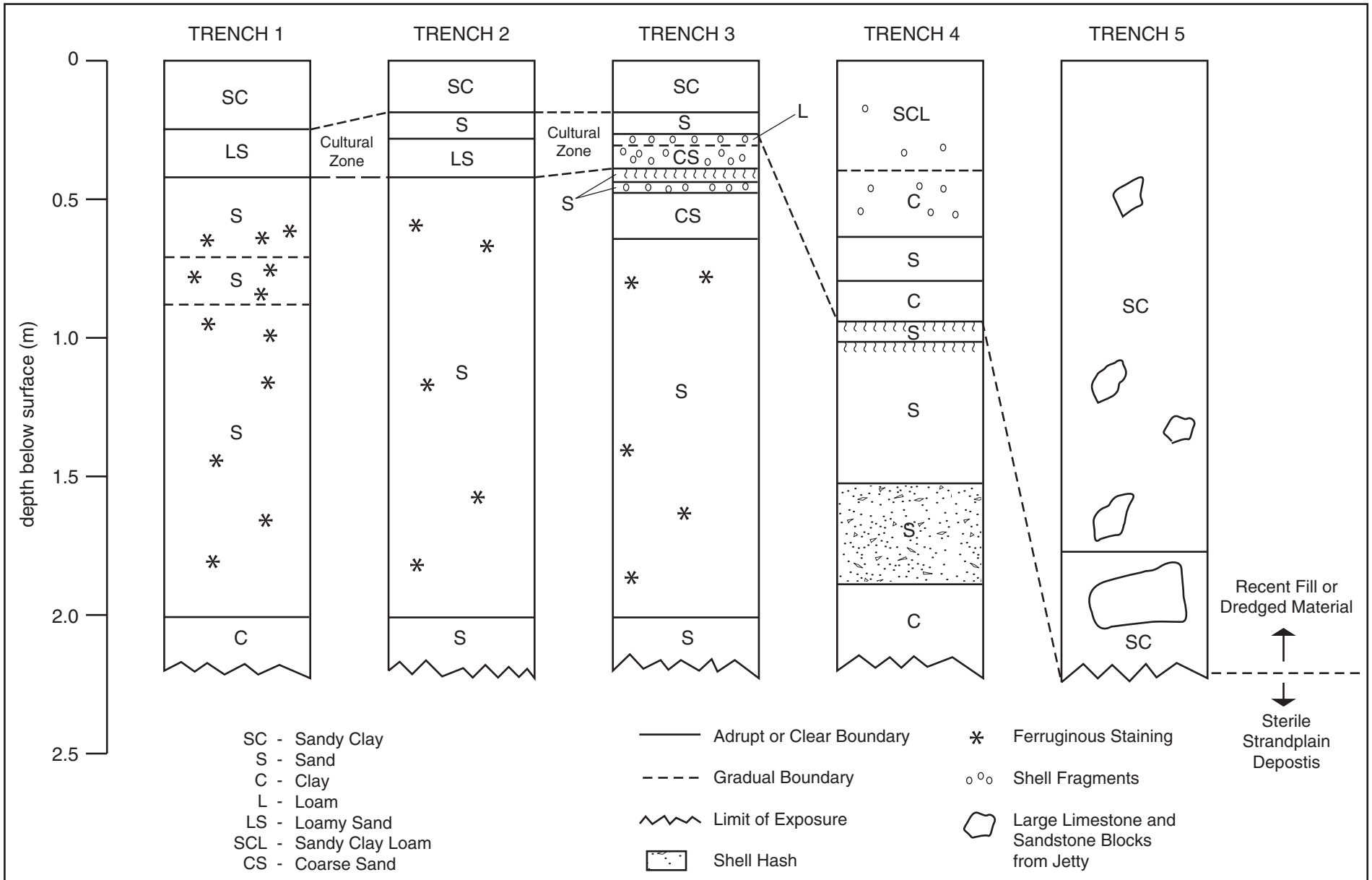


Figure 4. Comparative overview of trench profiles

Figure 5. Profile of stratigraphy in Trench 1, northeast wall

Figure 6. Profile of stratigraphy in Trench 2, northwest wall

Figure 7. Isolated artifacts recovered from Trench 2, 120–150 cmbs

150 cmbs). No maker's mark was present on the plate, which featured a polychrome (forest green and pink) floral design with a clear alkaline glaze. Based on the hard paste and clear glaze combined with the crisp pink inner band, which does not appear hand painted, and the floral motif (reminiscent of Blue Ridge/Southern Potteries designs), this piece appears to date from the early to mid-twentieth century (Cunningham 1985; Potter et al. n.d.). No cultural features were observed in this area, and the artifacts appear isolated, "floating" within the sandy matrix.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was excavated within the historically mapped location of the 1838 Velasco Exchange Building (Earls et al 1996). Trench stratigraphy includes alternating bands of fine and coarse sand and the thin band of brown loam or loamy sand also seen in Trenches 1 and 2 (see Figure 4, Figure 8). The far northwestern end of the trench exhibits the same modern disturbances among the upper strata that were observed in Trench 2 (figures 9 and 10). Trench 3 contained two cultural features, designated features 1 and 2. These are described below.

Figure 8. Profile of stratigraphy in Trench 3, southeastern wall, southeastern end of trench

Figure 9. North end of Trench 3, area of modern disturbance, northwest trench wall. Figure shows a pit filled with corroded metal fragments

Feature 1

Feature 1 consists of an in-filled trench or long pit containing a large (20-cm-diameter) horizontal cedar log or beam, which has been dug into a fine sand layer (10YR 7/4) (figures 11 and 12). This feature extends across both sides of the trench. Pit fill consists of coarse-grained sand (10YR 7/4) with large amounts of primarily fragmentary seashells and oyster shells. The northwest side of Trench 3 was mechanically scraped to expose a portion of the feature in plan view (Figure 13). The surface of this exposed portion of the feature was then shovel scraped to reveal the north-northwest and east-southeast boundaries of the trench. Afterwards, a portion of the feature extending 50 cm away from the southwest trench wall was excavated to the base of the feature, and the fill was screened through ¼-inch mesh (Figure 14). Although a large amount of shell hash was observed (Figure 15) and amounts of charcoal and small pebbles increased with depth, no artifacts were found within the feature fill. However, historic brick fragments (bright red in color) as well as corroded possible nail remnants were observed jumbled within the coarse sand layer that caps the feature (see Figure 12, Figure 16). At first this feature appeared similar to Feature 100, a possible structure foundation excavated in 1996 (Earls et al. 1996). The horizontal log placement even suggested a similar foundation type, so in an effort to identify additional beams or logs similar in spacing to those at Feature 100 (Earls et al. 1996), Trench 3 was extended to the southeast approximately 2 m. Although the extension was excavated down to the terminal depth of Feature 1, no additional logs were observed. Without additional logs to indicate a floor or structural foundation, Feature 1 has been interpreted as a possible builder's trench that still features the log or beam once used as part of a log structure's foundation.

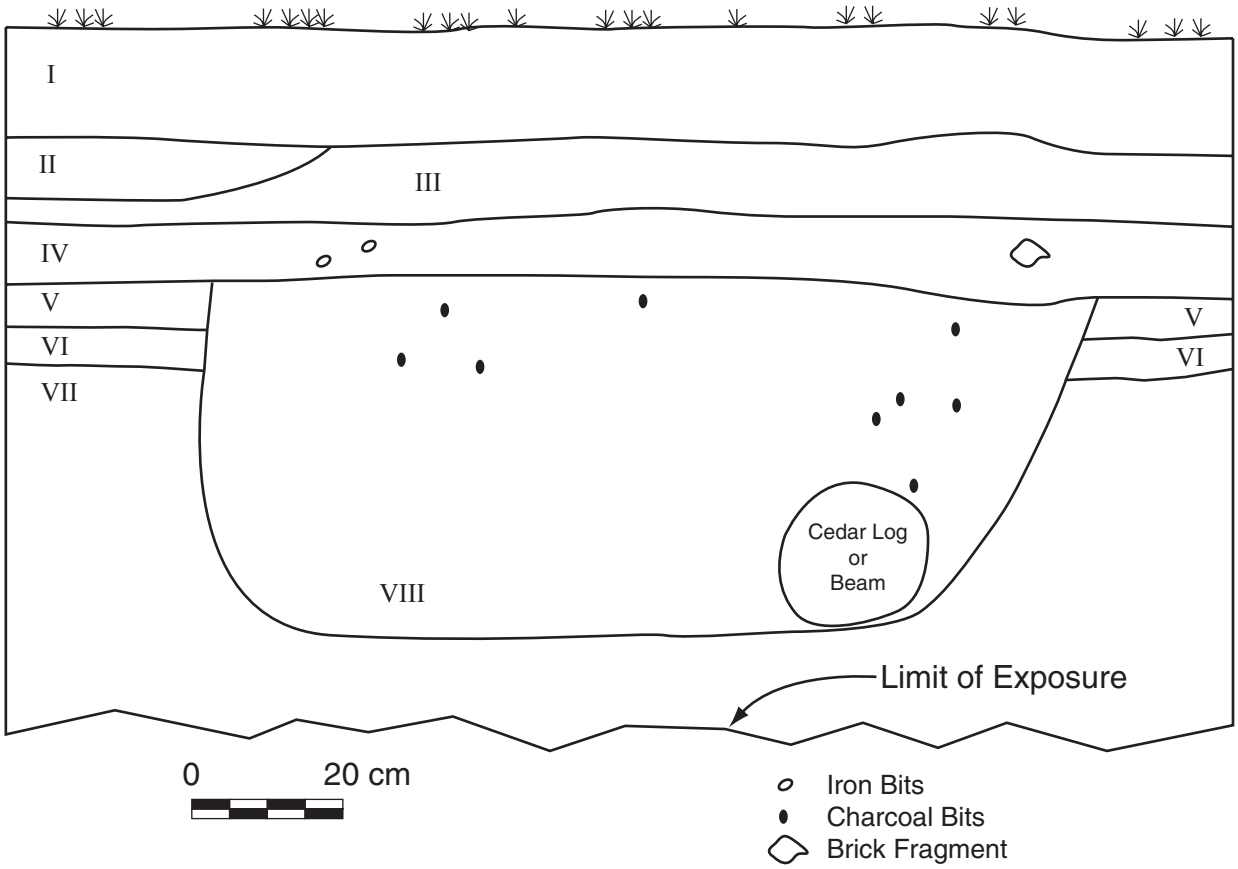
Feature 2

Feature 2 consists of a posthole containing loamy sand (10YR 6/2-6/4) and a decomposed wood post or small square pier, which extends into three layers of fine sand (figures 17 and 18). Examination of the wood suggests that it is possibly pine due to texture and consistency (Figure 19). Feature fill was examined by hand after the wood post fell from the face of the trench and was found to contain one butcher-cut medium-sized mammal bone. No other artifacts or charcoal were noted within the feature fill; however, historic artifacts were observed in the two strata that capped the feature and may represent remnants of the historical cultural zone noted during the 1996 excavations (Earls et al. 1996).

It should be noted that the feature was first encountered when a large section of the southwest side of Trench 3 collapsed, revealing the wood behind. The feature was in a precarious spot for investigation since the collapse left an unstable overhang of sandy deposits above the feature. It was therefore determined to be too dangerous to profile, so the mini trackhoe was used to scrape down a square area perpendicular to the trench in the vicinity of Feature 2. Due to these circumstances, it is unclear how far the feature actually extended into Stratum III, so the drawn profile shows only the scraped surface extent of the feature's top elevation.

Figure 10. Corroded metal from modern metal pit, northwestern end of Trench 3

Figure 11. Profile view of Feature 1, Trench 3, northwest wall



I. Sandy clay (10YR 4/4); abrupt, smooth boundary; no mottles; medium subangular blocky structure; friable consistency; many small roots.

II. Fine sand/shell hash (10YR 6/1); clear, smooth boundary; no mottles; granular structure; loose consistency; continuous inclusions of small shell fragments.

III. Fine sand (10YR 7/4); clear, wavy boundary; fine granular structure; loose consistency; few gravel inclusions.

IV. Coarse sand (10YR 7/4); clear, wavy boundary; coarse granular structure; loose consistency; historic artifacts including corroded metal bits indicating possible nails and low-fired red brick fragments found dispersed within this stratum.

V. Fine sand (10YR 7/4); clear, wavy boundary; fine granular structure; very friable consistency; no inclusions.

VI. Fine sand (10YR 4/2); clear, wavy boundary; fine granular structure; very friable consistency; inclusions of shell fragments are few.

VII. Fine sand (10YR 7/4); very fine granular structure; very friable consistency; slight ferruginous staining.

VIII. Feature 1 fill—Fine sand (10YR 7/4) with many gravels and shell inclusions, ephemeral ferruginous staining occurs throughout. Few charcoal bits are present and dispersed throughout fill. Density of charcoal and gravels increases slightly with depth.

Figure 12. Profile of Feature 1, Trench 3, Northwest Wall Exposure

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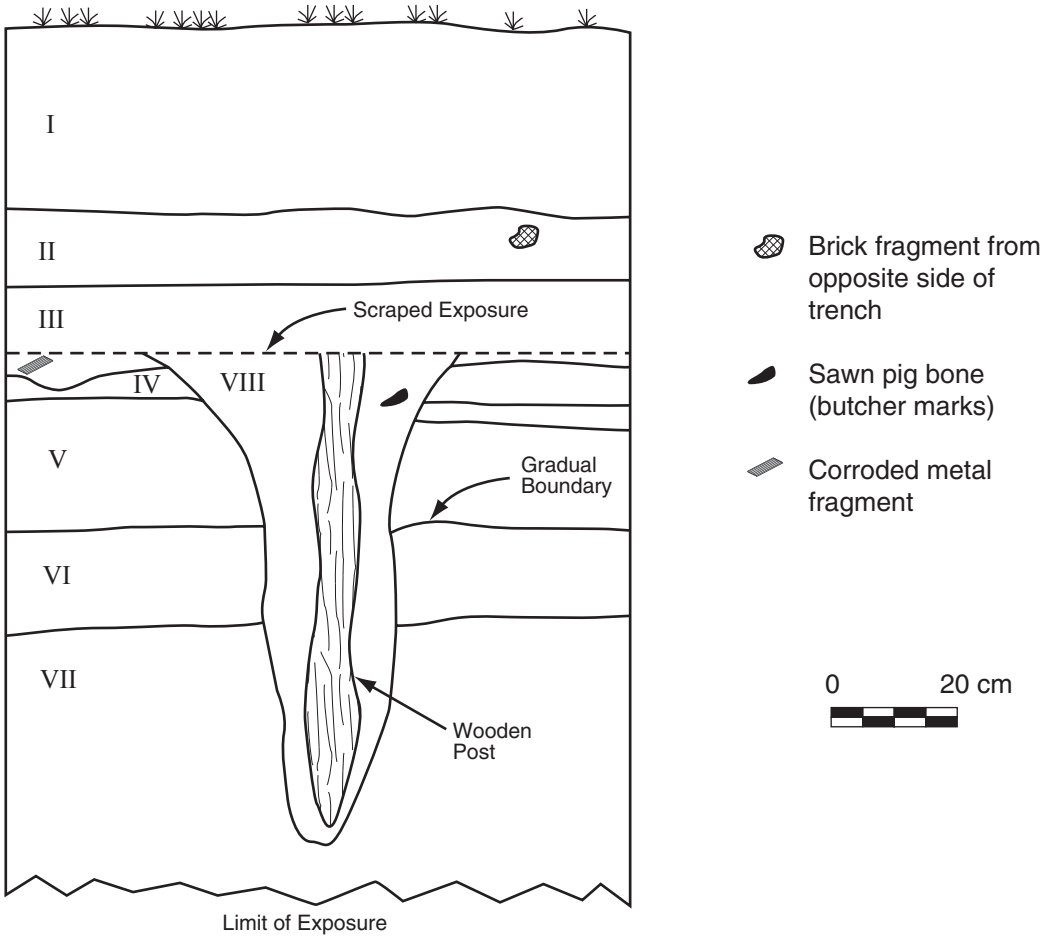
Figure 13. Plan view of Feature 1 after scraping

Figure 14. Feature 1, post sample excavation

Figure 15. Feature 1 shell hash fill material from screen

Figure 16. Isolated historic artifacts from coarse sand stratum overlying Feature 1

Figure 17. Profile view of Feature 2, Trench 3, northwest wall



I. Sandy clay (10YR 4/4); abrupt, smooth boundary; no mottles; subangular blocky, firm structure; friable consistency; inclusions of shell and rocks.

II. Sandy loam (10YR 5/4); clear, smooth boundary; no mottles; granular structure; very friable to loose consistency; inclusions of brick and shell fragments few.

III. Fine sand (10YR 7/2); clear, wavy boundary; no mottles; granular structure; friable consistency when wet; inclusions of small shell fragments common.

IV. Fine sand/shell hash (10YR 8/2); abrupt to clear, smooth boundary; granular structure; loose consistency; inclusions of shell fragments continuous.

V. Fine sand (10YR 8/2); gradual, smooth boundary; gran ular structure; friable consistency when wet; slight ferruginous staining common.

VI. Fine sand (10YR 5/2); clear to gradual, smooth boundary; granular structure; friable consistency when wet; common inclusions of shell at bottom of stratum.

VII. Fine sand (10YR 8/ 2); granular structure; friable consistency when wet; slight ferruginous staining common.

VIII. Feature 2 fill—loamy sand (10YR 6/3), granular structure; friable consistency when wet; inclusions of small shell fragments differentiate this feature fill from surrounding sandy sediments.

Figure 18. Profile of Feature 2, Trench 3, West Wall Exposure

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Figure 19. Wood from Feature 2, views a and b

Trench 4

Trench 4 was excavated at the far eastern extent of Velasco Townsite Block 12, outside of any previously mapped historic buildings. The upper meter of sediments in this trench contained more recent fill and dredge material than previously encountered in trenches 1–3 (see Figure 4, Figure 20). No cultural features were observed within Trench 4. Two isolated artifacts, a hand-blown olive-green wine bottle base and a large mammal (possibly cow) rib fragment, were found within the fine sand stratum (130–150 cmbs) (Figure 21).

Trench 5

Trench 5 was excavated completely outside of the previously documented town blocks. Trench stratigraphy in this location was overwhelmingly comprised of dredge material (see Figure 4, Figure 22). Modern trash, including a plastic spatula, was found to a depth of 1 m. Deposits also contained small and large boulders from the SPJ. The water table was encountered at about 110 cm in depth. No features and no isolated historic artifacts were observed in Trench 5.

Figure 20. Profile of stratigraphy in Trench 4, northeastern wall

Figure 21. Isolated artifacts recovered from Trench 4, 130–150 cmbs

Figure 22. Profile of stratigraphy in Trench 5, northwestern wall

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Features 1 and 2 represent the remains of historic-aged construction within the project area. However, neither contained diagnostic artifacts from the Old Velasco occupation that could offer significant research value. Also neither is unique among the features previously identified at the site; in fact, Feature 2 is 1 of over 300 postholes identified and recorded at 41BO125 (Earls et al. 1996). Based on their position below the historic cultural zone and their morphology, features 1 and 2 may be associated with buildings or outbuildings connected to the 1838 Velasco Exchange. The lack of diagnostic artifacts makes dating either feature uncertain. Evidence suggests that the data potential from further investigation of these features is low. Therefore, it is the opinion of the Principal Investigator that cultural resource clearance be granted for this project.

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Appendix

Project Location Map (not for public disclosure)