

Collector and THC Steward work together to document site collection.

When I first found site 41ME87 in south central Medina County in 1997, I realized it was a very important site. A large array of scraping tools lay strewn across a flood plain area encompassing approximately 10 acres. The site was protected to the northwest by a line of hills, which were also capped by Uvalde Gravels, making the site even more attractive with an easily accessible source of lithics for tool production.

The site had been plowed for decades by the owner, regularly bringing new artifacts to the surface. Being in a flood plain, overbank flooding occasionally laid down silt deposits on top of the site. It was obvious the site contained sealed stratified deposits undisturbed below the plow zone. That was good for me, because I am too lazy even to dig a test hole if it is not required to make this determination.

With further investigation, I discovered that a hole had already been started by another collector at the south east corner of the site, right on the creek bank. I could readily see hearth stones 30" below the surface exposed in the collectors excavation, which confirmed my belief of sealed deposits. I determined to identify this collector and recruit him/her to add their findings to the site record.

After spending hours collecting the site, drawing a rough site sketch, noting observations, taking photographs, and making a photograph log, I headed back home. I was tired, but happy, drawing much satisfaction from locating and recording another interesting site along the transitional zone between the Texas hill country and the coastal plain.

After documenting and photographing all the artifacts I had found that day, and filling out a Texsite form on the site itself, I packaged it all up and sent it electronically through e-mail to the Texas Archaeological Research Lab (TARL) at UT Austin so they could enter that data in the site records and issue a Trinomial Site Number.

Within a few days TARL issued site # 41ME87 to my submission. Then I began a search to identify and contact the other collector, whose excavation I had come across in the field that day. Being in a very small community, all that is required is a few questions to the right folks and you can find out who is doing what, and so it was that I was able to find out the collector's name and phone number.

I called him up the next day and told him what I was about and he agreed to meet with me later the same day. In fact, he already knew I was also collecting the site and had been thinking about calling me to compare notes on that site.

The collector came to my house later that evening with bags of artifacts, and we sat about examining everything he had found. All his artifacts were bagged per levels he was able to identify in his excavation, and each artifact had been labeled with fine tipped permanent marker written on clear nail polish, with the collector assigned site number! This guy even had quad maps with his assigned site numbers marking the site location on the maps.

We photographed digitally, every artifact, and once I explained that this information would be added to the existing site record, he agreed that I could send all this information to TARL to add to the record. He asked me why I was not digging that site as well, and I explained that besides being too lazy to dig, I was more interested in the information the site contained than in finding pristine, complete artifacts. He understood that I meant by "information", the association of artifacts in the deposits as they were originally laid down.

I invited him to join the Southern Texas Archaeological Association and help us document south Texas' archaeological record. He declined, but, did agree to continue sharing all information on this site and others he collected from that I already knew about. I found it amusing that he would not share information on sites that I did not know about, and jokingly told him so. We had a good laugh, but, he still did not offer more information. I wouldn't either, but, at least we did agree to work together on common sites.

Thanks to this fella's willingness to share information, the recorded data on this ancient Indian occupation was doubled over what I had originally recorded. My hats off to my fellow collectors. Not everyone is interested enough to be motivated to do this sometimes tedious work, but, we can all contribute in some fashion as this very salt of the earth American collector has proven.

Artifacts found on site 41ME87 are attached and range through time period of early Archaic through Historic times.