

Smith Collection
Arrow, Dart and Fragmented Projectile Points
Found Within the Lower Rio Grande Valley Region

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OUR GOAL

Our goal at CHAPS is to identify evidence for the 10,000 year occupation of the Rio Grande Valley region. This entails photographing, describing and sometimes drawing or casting projectile points and establishing their date within known typologies, identifying the stone or lithic source materials for the points and locating their place of discovery. With the permission of the “finder” and the landowner, we will record sites with the Texas Historical Commission to ensure information on the sites is preserved for future generations. Information gleaned from these descriptive endeavors will be used for scholarly research purposes. All site locations will be kept confidential per the guidelines established by the State of Texas and the larger code of ethics adhered to by the Register of Professional Archaeologists.

SITE LOCATIONS

The points found in Tamaulipas came from two separate private ranches east of Zapata, Texas near the Rio Salado. This first ranch is called Las Blancas Ranch located on Highway 2 near the Rio Salado just west of Falcon Lake. These points (# 1, 5, 6, 13 and 14) were found between the years of 2003 and 2006. They were found in rocky/gravel area where the soil color was similar to the point color. The second ranch, called Garcia Ranch is located 8 miles south of the Rio Salado. Points # 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18 and 19 were found on Garcia Ranch close to Falcon Lake. Point # 2 was found on a high ridge on the same ranch.

The points found in Starr County were found on a private family ranch that has been owned by the same family since the 1890s. Item # 16 was found near the headwaters of Las Blancas Creek approximately during years 2005/2006. The land surface in this area is a secondary growth of mesquite. The original *Ramadera* (shack) was knocked down in the area. Based on the size of the trees, the re-growth is thought to be approximately 30 years old. This land had sorghum fields at one point. Item # 15 was found on the same ranch but on the south side. It was found in 1996 sitting on top of a rain-washed road. This particular road does not exist now.

The point (#17) found in Zapata County was found in 1981 on a 4,000 acre ranch that has recently been sold to a neighbor. This property is typical ranchland; predominantly Zapata clay. The property is an approved pasture landscape with native brush, a lot of gravel and a creek running through the center.

LOCATION COORDINATES

Smith 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18, 19, 20, 21

Lat: 26° 48' 53.12"N

Long: 99° 23' 19.20"W

Smith 1, 5, 6, 13 and 14

Lat: 26° 59' 24.95"N

Long: 99° 40' 14.38"W

Smith 15

Lat: 26° 35' 9.10"N

Long: 99° 49' 49.63"W

Smith 16

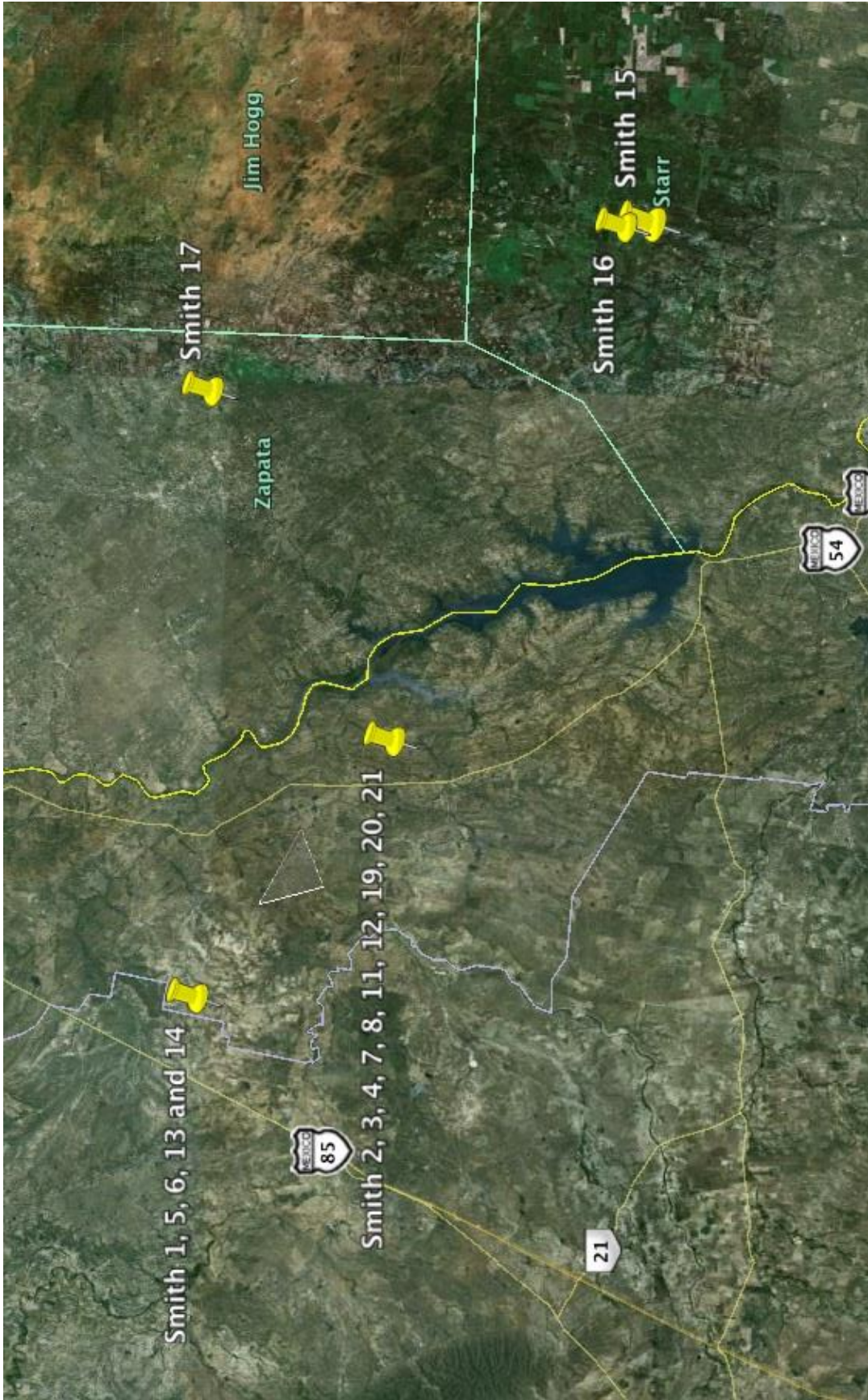
Lat: 26° 36' 57.01"N

Long: 98° 50' 0.52"W

Smith 17

Lat: 26° 59' 57.06"

Long: 99° 01' 27.27"



1



5



9



2



6



10



3



7



11



4

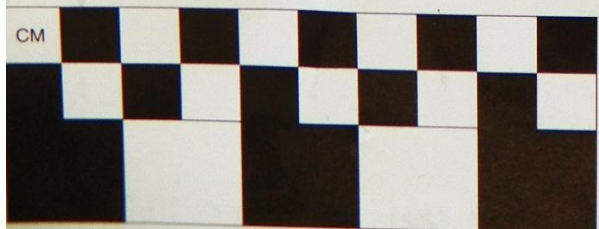


8



Roland Smith
Collection
March 2013

CM



0

1/8
inch

1

2



12



16



20



13



17



21



14



18



22



15

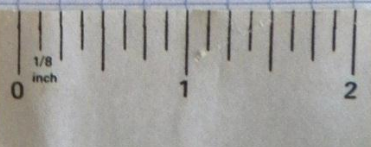
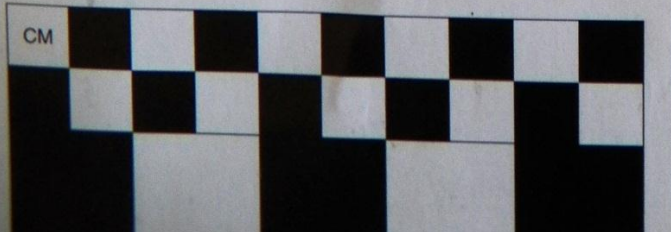


19



Roland Smith
Collection
March 2013

CM



Projectile Points: Roland Smith Collection – March 2013

#	Material	Type	Color	Location	Period
1	chert	Toyah	2.5Y 7/1 light gray	Tamaulipas (Las Blancas Ranch)	Late Prehistoric 700AD – 1600AD
2	chert	Toyah	5YR 5/1 gray	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Late Prehistoric 700AD – 1600AD
3	chert	Abasolo	5YR 7/1 light gray	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Early Archaic 6000-2500 BC
4	Waxy chert	Livermore	10YR 6/2 light brownish gray	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Prehistoric AD900 – AD1400
5	chert	Ensor	10R 7/3 pale red	Tamaulipas (Las Blancas Ranch)	Transitional Archaic 300BC – AD700
6	chert	Ensor	7.5YR 6/2 pinkish gray	Tamaulipas (Las Blancas Ranch)	Transitional Archaic 300BC – AD700
7	chert	Tortuga	10YR 6/2 light brownish gray	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Middle Archaic 2500BC – 1000BC
8	chert	Tortuga	10YR 6/2 light brownish gray	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Middle Archaic 2500BC - 1000BC
9	chert	Tortuga	10YR 5/2 greyish brown and 7/2 light grey	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Middle Archaic 2500 BC – 1000 BC

10	Chert with inclusions	Matamoros	5YR 6/4 Light reddish brown	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Late Archaic 1000 BC – 300 BC
11	Quartz or Chert	Matamoros	7.5YR 8/1 white	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Late Archaic 1000 BC – 300 BC
12	Quartz or Chert	Matamoros	2.5Y 8/1 white	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Late Archaic 1000BC – 300BC
13	Agate	Scallorn	2.5YR 8/1 white and 2.5YR 5/4 reddish brown	Tamaulipas (Las Blancas Ranch)	Late Prehistoric AD 700 – AD 1600
14	Siliceous Siltstone	(stem broken)	7.5YR 7/6 reddish yellow	Tamaulipas (Las Blancas Ranch)	Unidentified – stem broken/ no base
15	Quartz	Matamoros	N 8.5/ white	Starr Co.	Late Archaic 1000BC – 300 BC
16	Chert	Caracara	Black	Starr Co. at headwaters of Las Blancas Creek	Late Prehistoric AD700 – AD1600
17	Quartz or Chert	(missing base)	N 8/ white	Zapata Co.	Unidentified – unfinished point or broken tip
18	Chert	(small ax head/blade)	2.5Y 5/2 greyish brown	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Unidentified – not a projectile point

19	Quartz	(missing base)	N 8/ white	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Unidentified – unfinished point or broken tip
20	RGC Chert outcrop	(missing base)	5YR 7/3 pink	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Unidentified – unfinished point or broken tip
21	RGC Chert Outcrop	(missing base)	5YR 6/2-5/2 pinkish gray- reddish gray	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Unidentified – unfinished point or broken tip
22	Agate/ Quartz	(missing base)	7.5YR 6/1 gray	Tamaulipas (Garcia Ranch)	Unidentified – unfinished point or broken tip

Abasolo (dart point) is a large, unstemmed triangular point that has a distinctive well rounded base. The lateral edges may be beveled or steeply chipped, and the base is sometimes thinned. It is similar to *Catan* but larger in size. (Turner and Hester 1999: 68)

Ensor (dart point) varies considerably in all dimensions, but broad stems, shallow side-notches and generally straight bases tend to identify the type. Specimens with a V-shaped basal notch are sometimes called “Ensor-Frio.” Frio points have a triangular body, often short and broad, with wide side- or corner- notches and concave basal indentation that ranges from shallow to a deep U-shaped notch. (Turner and Hester 1999: 114, 123)

Caracara (arrow point) is side notched, small with convex to nearly straight lateral edges. Flaking is random but usually well executed. The rounded or squared ends of the basal “ears” usually extend slightly beyond with of the shoulders. Bases are normally straight but may be slightly concave or slightly convex. (Turner and Hester 1999: 205)

Livermore (arrow point) is a long, slender point with deep, concave lateral edges and shoulders which project laterally at right angles. The stem is slender and the base is convex. Specimens often appear to be crudely made. (Turner and Hester 1999: 220)

Matamoros (dart point) is a small, often thick, triangular or sub triangular, unstemmed point that is similar to *Tortugas*, but markedly smaller. Average length of *Tortugas* is 4.9 mm – 6.7 mm and *Matamoros* ranges from 3.2 mm to 4.7 mm in length. (Turner and Hester 1999: 153)

Scallorn (arrow point) is triangular, corner-notched point that has straight to convex lateral edges (often finely serrated) and well-barbed shoulders. The expanding stem varies from a broad wedge-shape to extremities as wide as the shoulders; the base may be straight, convex or concave. Turner and Hester 1999: 230)

Tortugas (dart point) are large, unstemmed, triangular points that have an approximately straight to concave base and alternately beveled edges. It is often thick and crudely flaked in the midsection and well-thinned basally. (Turner and Hester 1999: 188)

Toyah (arrow point) are small, triangular points that have two side notches anywhere from near the base to about the middle of the point, and usually a third notch in the center of the base. It is somewhat similar to Harrell, but smaller and more crudely made. (Turner and Hester 1999: 234)

SPECIAL COMMENTS

Items # 1 and # 2 – have been identified as Toyah type points from the late prehistoric period. They are typically found in West Texas and but are also found in far-north Texas to far west-central Texas to deep-south Texas (note that a toyah site in Jim Wells county-Kingsville and Chiltipin Creek region is referred to as ‘deep-south Texas’). However, analysis done by Stephen L. Black et al. in the 1980s found that Toyah settlements appeared in South Texas around A.D. 1450 and inhabitants went on hunting trips within 50 km (31 mi) away from the site. Habitants of Toyah sites hunted bison, deer, pronghorn, rodents, rabbits. The two Smith points were found at two separate locations in Tamaulipas near Falcon Lake.

Item # 3 – has been identified as an Abasolo type point from the Early Archaic period. This point could be made from the outcrop of chert visited and mined by prehistoric people settling in this area. The outcrop was discovered just north of Rio Grande City and is referred to as the El Sauz crop (see map attached).

Item # 4 – has been identified as a Livermore point and is typically found up by the Big Bend region of Texas. Although not found in large numbers, this point could have made its way to the Rio Grande River region via trade or migration.

Items # 14, # 17, #19, #20, # 21 and # 22 - we cannot complete diagnostic analysis due to the fact that the bases are missing. We cannot tell if these items had triangular bases or were stemmed. It is possible that these are incomplete triangular points; that is a cache of points left aside to return to and complete and use at a later time. These items are almost complete except for basal thinning at the bottom. Therefore, we cannot determine whether these points were used and broken tips or are unfinished/unused points.

Item # 16 – has been identified as a Caracara type point from the Late Prehistoric period. This point was found at the headwaters of Las Blancas Creek in Starr County, Texas. This point is made of (black) chert. Chert is pure silica and comes in many colors, varieties and textures. This particular point was examined by Dr. James Hinthorne, UTPA Petrologist, with x-ray diffraction to find out its chemical composition which was positively identified as chert (silica SiO_2). We took the extra step to examine this item with the x-ray machine because it was an unusual material and when examined with a monocular hand lens, we could not immediately determine if it was basalt or fine grain chert. This item appeared to be too fine grain with no large crystals.

Item # 18 – this item appears to be a flaked knife or a scraper used for cutting/scraping hides or cutting meat. It is a large flake with a squared corner. Therefore, it is not a projectile point.

SOURCES

Munsell Color

2009 Munsell Soil-Color Charts. Munsell Color, Grand Rapids, MI.

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2010 “El Sauz Chert: A Distinctive Lithic Resource on the Lower Rio Grande”. Southern Texas Archaeological Association, San Antonio.

Turner, Sue and Thomas R. Hester

1999 A Field Guide to Stone Artifacts of Texas Indians. Gulf Publishing, New York.

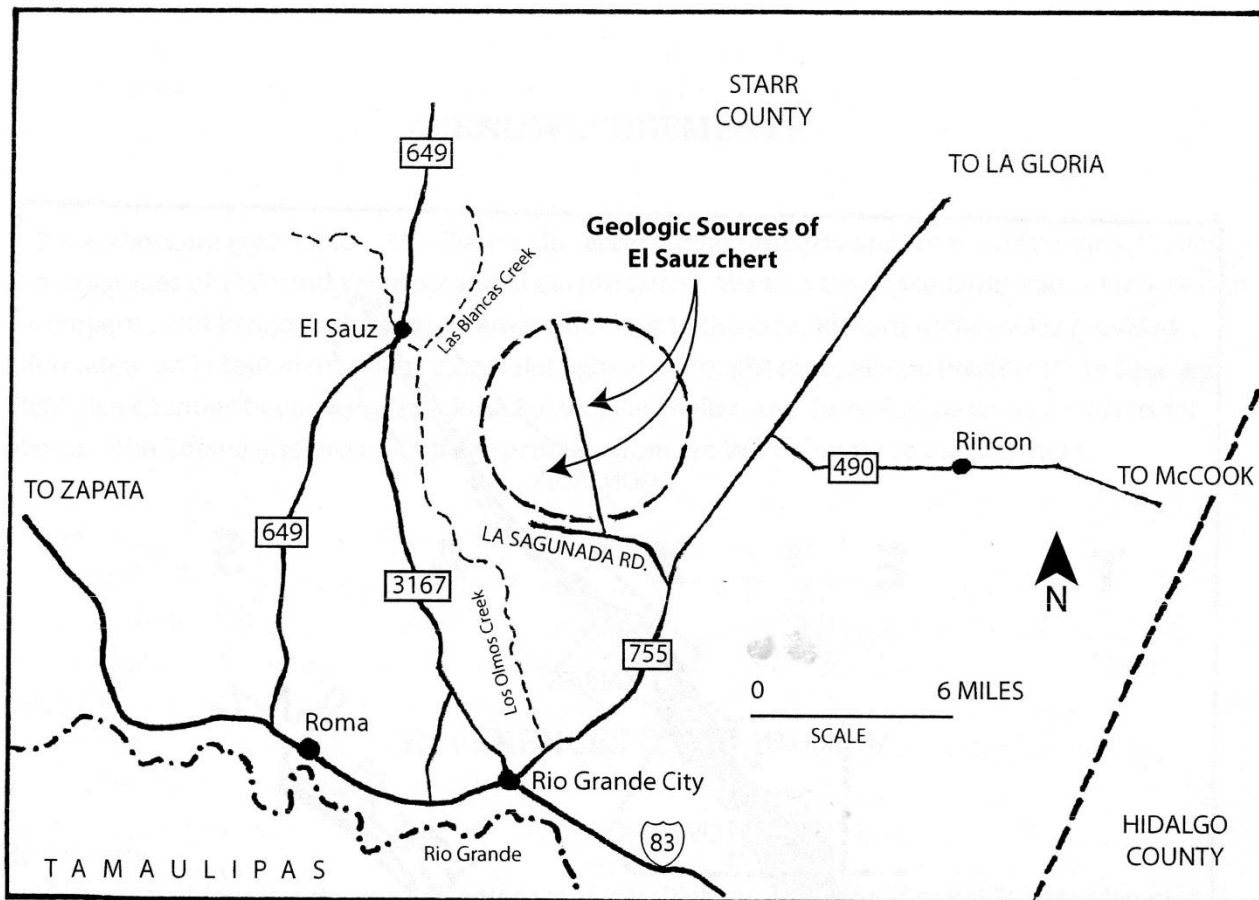


Figure 2. The known geologic sources of El Sauz Chert in Starr County, including El Cerrito Villarreal, El Cerrito Garcia, and 41SR137, are within the circle at center.

- Kumpe and Kryzwonski Report