

PRESIDIO, TEXAS (PRESIDIO COUNTY) WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT,  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHIVAL SURVEY AND APPRAISAL

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Texas Antiquities Permit Number 870

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## **Part I**

ABSTRACT

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PRESIDIO, TEXAS (PRESIDIO COUNTY) WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT,  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHIVAL SURVEY AND APPRAISAL

J. Charles Kelley, Ph.D.  
Principal Investigator

Ellen Abbott Kelley, M.A.

ABSTRACT

The City of Presidio, Texas (Presidio County), plans a major enlargement and improvement of their water system, including new and larger water lines in the city, one leading to a large storage facility on the high terrace to the north, one leading to a new pumping station near the railway station, and a long line leading eastward along a country road paralleling the southern exterior of the new city landfill area into an identified new water source in which they will drill at least two new water lines. Blue Mountain Consultants contracted to do an archaeological survey of the various areas involved together with a major archival survey of the literature of the La Junta area, terminating the study with an appraisal of the adverse or non-adverse effect of these operations on the cultural resources of the area. The archival survey of the ethnohistory, history, and archaeology of the La Junta area produced a great body of data and references which is not included in this preliminary draft report but which will be included in the final report. Field work of the Project was carried out on March 15 through 19th. No new archaeological sites were discovered in the areas involved and known archaeological sites are located at a considerable distance from the areas where work will take place. Appraisal of the project by Blue Mountain Consultants results in a request for a "no adverse effect" recommendation.

PART I ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND APPRAISAL

Pipeline Trenching and Related Work Planned: A network of new water lines are planned and deep trenches will be excavated to bury them. At least two new wells will be drilled, a pumping station constructed, and a large water holding facility will be built (see enclosed Project plan). All of these activities require the use of excavating and construction machinery and pose a threat to any archaeological/historical remains that may lie within work areas. It should be noted that most of the trenching operations will take place near the center of city streets; the latter have been bladed from the natural terrace gravels of the outwash plain of Terrace 1 (where the river floodplain is Terrace 0) of the Rio Grande.

This datum both complicates and simplifies archaeological reconnaissance. The complication is that the hard-packed and repeatedly graded street surface makes shovel testing very difficult. However, the same blading produces a smooth clean surface in which archaeological materials could be easily detected (in most instances the pipeline/trench runs along the center of the street) and at the edge of the street the blading was carried out in such a way that each side is cut from six to twelve inches (deeper locally) below the surface, exposing in the resulting cut a vertical profile of what lies beneath the surface.

Also, such blading usually had turned up a line of loose gravel and sand which could easily be examined for the presence of charcoal, heat-fractured stones, debitage, and artifacts. For the most part, the city engineers had staked out (with numbered stakes) a line along one side of the street and had placed flagged nails along the exact line of the future trench, typically located 30 feet from the line of stakes. In other instances, staking of the water lines had not been completed and there was some difficulty involved in locating the exact location of the future trenches. Eventually such problems were solved.

Summary of the Archaeological Matrix of the La Junta de los Rios: Fortunately, a number of archaeological surveys and some excavation of sites has been made in the greater Presidio area - La Junta de los Rios - and much of the area involved falls within the formally established La Junta Archaeological District" (see enclosure, taken from Goode and Lewis, 1982). Much of the earlier and some of the more recent surveys and excavations were carried out by the Principal Investigator of the current project, who also identified and described the location of the historic Indian Pueblos of La Junta (Kelley 1952-53). It should be noted that the only one of these historic sites located dangerously close to the Presidio Project is the Millington Site (San Cristobal), which is now a State Archaeological Site, most of which is owned by the State of Texas. Special care was needed in inspecting proposed activity areas located anywhere near this site.

The sequence of archaeological cultures in this area is well known. The earliest horizon is that of the Paleo-Indian big game hunters; evidence for its presence in the immediate area is doubtful, if not entirely negative. It was followed by the Archaic Horizon (Early, Middle, and Late) characterized by mixed hunting and gathering sites characterized by lithic tools; it is well represented on the high Terrace 2 gravel mesas projecting into the La Junta valley. The late Prehistoric Horizon in the greater La Junta area now appears to be quite complicated; as originally known it was called the Bravo Valley Aspect, essentially a village dwelling, semi-agricultural, pottery making, group ancestral to the historic pueblos of the Spanish Contact period. Recent work by Robert Malouff (1985, 1987), Malouff and Wulfkuhle (1989), and Kelley (1990) has shown that the Late Prehistoric was much more

complex than earlier supposed, and that both ceramic and non-ceramic occupations are represented.

The physiographic/settlement pattern of the immediate area is well known. The Millington Site is located on the southern edge of Terrace 1, near an old abandoned channel of the river; so is the Kopenborger Site. The Loma Alta Site (San Juan Evangelista), and San Antonio de Padua (on the American side of the Rio Grande) are located on high points of Terrace 2, in locations close to the river (or old channels). All known Archaic sites are located on the surface of Terrace 2 (or higher) mesas, occasionally along the banks of ephemeral streams entering the Rio Grande or in adjacent mountain areas. No archaeological sites are known from the broad outwash plain of Terrace 1, except as noted on its river edge. Except for the area where wells are to be drilled and the Terrace 2 mesa point on which the water storage facility is to be located, all of the excavation and construction activities to be undertaken lie in this same outwash plain, including almost all of the city of Presidio.

Methodology of the Archaeological Survey: To serve as a control for our survey, we arbitrarily identified various runs of the water lines as Lines 1,2,3,and 4, and divided each Line into convenient "Units" (as shown on the Project plan, for control of field work and note taking. A special form was devised to record observations made on each Line and in each Unit. Both archaeologists worked the prospective excavation and construction areas on foot, carefully observing the surface of the city street and the exposed vertical cuts made along each side by blading operations. The Principal Investigator recorded his observations on tape with a hand recorder, and made photographs of the area; after a Unit had been completely searched, the two archaeologists conferred regarding their observations, and Archaeologist Ellen Abbott Kelley recorded the joint observations on the Unit form. Typed copies of these original field notes for each Unit are included in Appendix A of this report; the original written notes, tapes, and photographs are at present on file at the office of Blue Mountain Consultants near Fort Davis, Texas.

Conclusions: With one exception, no definite archaeological remains were found in any of the Lines and Units surveyed. The one exception was the western end of Madero Street, Line 2, Unit 1. There Madero Street cuts through the edge of Old Presidio (presumably the section destroyed by heavy flooding in the 1920s); on the surface of adjacent vacant lots we observed sun-struck glass and crockery older than contemporary wares in use. Unfortunately, plowing during cultivation in these vacant lots had mixed the older material with contemporary junk. None of the older materials showed in the bladed street surface, and in the vertical blade cuts along the sides, except in the upper two inches. Blading of the street has removed any of the Old Presidio litter that might have been preserved there.

At the southwest corner of Madero Street and Thompson Street,

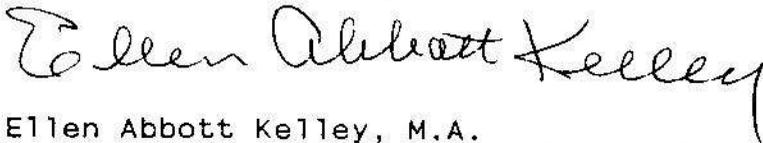
in Line 2, Unit 1, there is an abandoned and heavily eroded adobe structure, presumably one of the Old Presidio buildings; others in even more ruined condition lie to the south and southwest. We are assured by the engineers of the city of Presidio that the water line will run along the northern side of Madero street, over 30 feet north of the adobe on the corner, which accordingly will not be harmed by excavation of the water line trench, if, indeed, it is worth preserving. Enrique Madrid, of Redford, reports that there is a La Junta archaeological site located near the river edge of Terrace 1 in this same locality, but we surveyed the area lying within one block of the water line in the Madero Street locality without locating this site.

In view of the data summarized above, and described in detail in the enclosed written unit note sheets, it is the conclusion of Blue Mountain consultants that no cultural materials will be destroyed or endangered by the activities of the Presidio Water Improvement Project and that no mitigation is required. If deeply buried sites should by chance be located below the streets of Presidio, and elsewhere that trenching activities will be required, it is our conclusion that such sites, which probably do not exist in these old gravel terrace deposits, could only be located by archaeological monitoring of the actual trenching activities.

Accordingly, we request that a recommendation of "no adverse effects" be made and that permission for the activities of the Presidio Water Improvement Project be allowed to proceed at an early date.



J. Charles Kelley, Ph.D.  
Principal Investigator

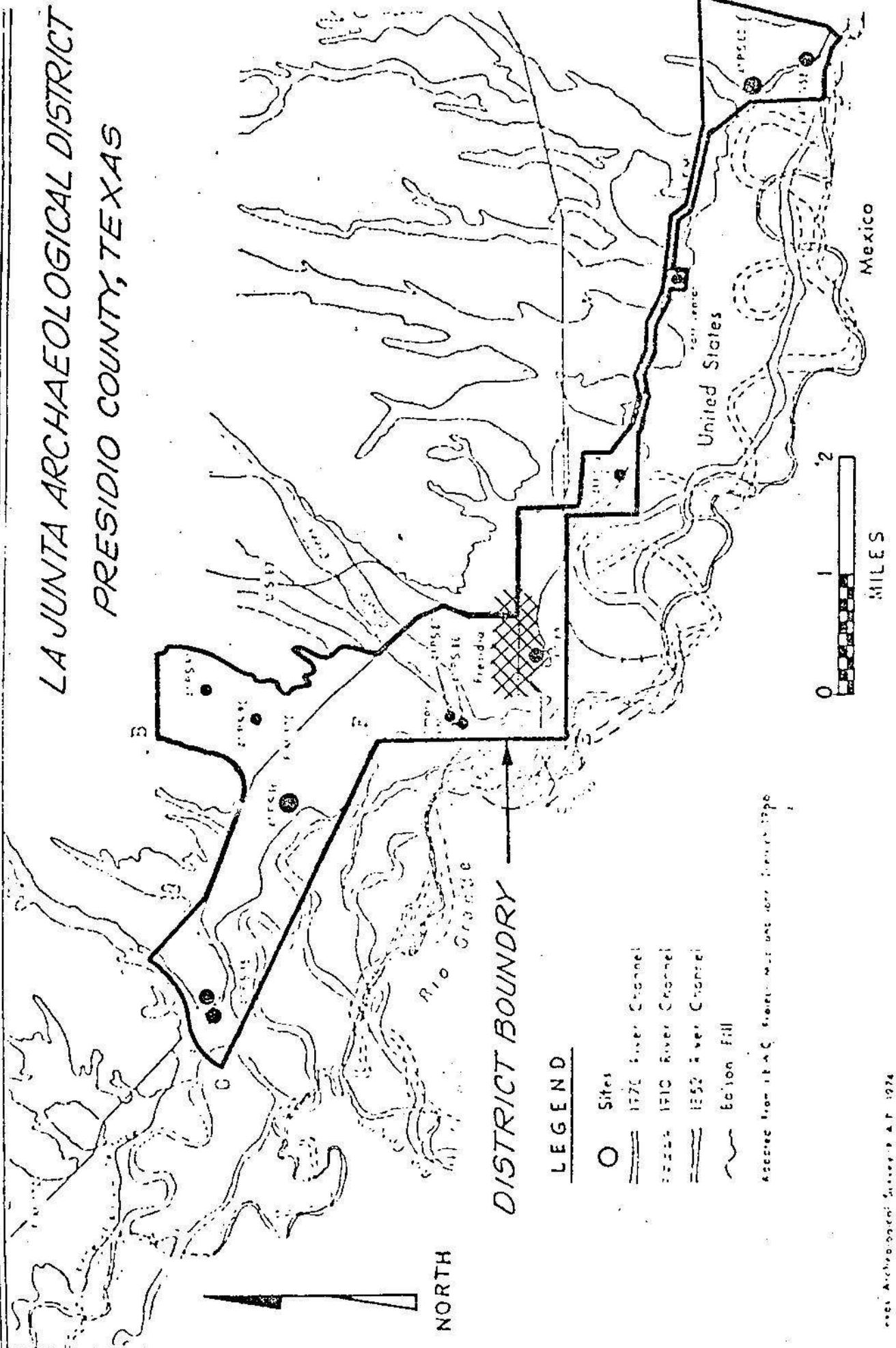


Ellen Abbott Kelley

Ellen Abbott Kelley, M.A.  
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Fort Davis, Texas  
March 26, 1990

# LA JUNTA ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISTRICT PRESIDIO COUNTY, TEXAS



DISTRICT BOUNDARY

### LEGEND

- Sites
- ==== 1876 River Channel
- ===== 1910 River Channel
- ===== 1952 River Channel
- ~~~~~ Embankment

Adapted from U.S.G.S. Survey map of the Rio Grande

1952 Archaeological Survey, A.P. 1974

Based on Goode and Lewis, 1982



PROJECT: PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION, CITY OF PRESIDIO,  
TEXAS, MARCH 1990, BLUE MOUNTAIN CONSULTANTS CONTRACT

DATE: MARCH 15 1990. Field Notes: Recorder E Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Water Line: Line #1 (Kelley designation) - storage tank area

Section: Unit #1 - from benchmark on top of terrace to Stake 15+00

Street: -

Stake Number(s) [if any located]: Benchmark to Stake 15+00

OBSERVATIONS: (by whom): E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Terrain: 2nd or 3rd terrace projection extending out into river valley. Surface  
gently sloping & covered by a disintegrating desert pavement.

Vegetation: Primarily greasewood, some ocatilla, prickly pear & cactacious  
plants. Very little grass.

Archaeological Remains Noted: Should have been an archaeological site but no  
evidence it was. A "hearth" of volcanic stone shows very little fire cracking,  
if any, and probably is a hunter's one night fireplace.

Identified Site (number if known): none

New Site (field number): none

Shovel Tests Made (describe): none warranted

Specimens Noted or Collected: none

Photos Made: yes - J. C. Kelley                      Sketches (over) no

Comments: Cut by several vehicle roads & by gravel quarry lying toward S. of  
contract area & outside pipeline construction. Desert pavement lies on  
loose sandy silt. On desert pavement, singly or in clusters, are vesicular  
volcanic stones ranging from cobbles to large boulders, mostly with smoothed  
edges.

PROJECT: PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION, CITY OF PRESIDIO,  
TEXAS, MARCH 1990, BLUE MOUNTAIN CONSULTANTS CONTRACT

DATE: MARCH 16 1990. Field Notes: Recorder E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Water Line: Line #1

Section: Unit #2 - from corner of Cassell & Tarver Streets north to junkyard,  
across tip of residual terraces to link with Unit #1.

Street: -

Stake Number(s) [if any located]: 15+00 south to Stake 1+00

OBSERVATIONS: (by whom): E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Terrain: City street extending about 3-4 blocks through section partially  
obscured by old junkyard, across tips of gravel terraces and intervening  
arroyo. Terraces of unconsolidated conglomerate.

Vegetation: City street - none. Gravel terraces have catclaw, greasewood,  
cacti, and arroyo shows clumps of grass.

Archaeological Remains Noted: none

Identified Site (number if known): none

New Site (field number): none

Shovel Tests Made (describe): none warranted

Specimens Noted or Collected: none

Photos Made: yes - J. C. Kelley Sketches (over) none

Comments: Road cut through junkyard several feet deep. Profiles shows  
unconsolidated conglomerate of water and wind borne pebbles, sand, gravel,  
and cobbles. In section linking with Unit #1, the cut is 6-8 feet deep  
showing no archaeological materials.

PROJECT: PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION, CITY OF PRESIDIO,  
TEXAS, MARCH 1990, BLUE MOUNTAIN CONSULTANTS CONTRACT

DATE: MARCH 15 1990. Field Notes: Recorder E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Water Line: Line #1 (Kelley designation)

Section: Unit #3 - corner of Cassell & Tarver Ave westward along Cassell to  
Marfa highway and one block farther west.

Street: Corner of Cassell & Tarver Aves.

Stake Number(s) [if any located]: 1+00 westward to Stake 29

OBSERVATIONS: (by whom): E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Terrain: Unit #3 is a city street running east-west across outwash plain.

Street not paved but blading has cut into gravels & cobbles of outwash plain  
and finer gravel may have been applied.

Vegetation: City street & vegetation is in yards & vacant lots. Natural  
vegetation consists of greasewood and grasses.

Archaeological Remains Noted: Search of cobbles along street ditches and  
vacant lots yields no traces of archaeological materials

Identified Site (number if known): none

New Site (field number): none

Shovel Tests Made (describe): no basis for testing

Specimens Noted or Collected: none

Photos Made: yes - J. C. Kelley Sketches (over) no

Comments: In places along streets there are slight rises or hummocks.

Inspected carefully in road-side butts, these rises appear to be entirely  
natural. No further testing or survey along unit #3 is required.

PROJECT: PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION, CITY OF PRESIDIO,  
TEXAS, MARCH 1990, BLUE MOUNTAIN CONSULTANTS CONTRACT

DATE: MARCH 16 1990. Field Notes: Recorder E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Water Line: Line #1

Section: Unit #4 - corner of Cassell and Harmon Streets south for two blocks.

Turn west on Bledsoe for five blocks, job north for a block, turn west and

~~Street~~ continue on Bledsoe westward seven blocks until dead end.

Stake Number(s) [if any located]: 29+00 to 72+00 to 82+00

OBSERVATIONS: (by whom): E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Terrain: City street essentially level except for small dips & rises. Street  
cut on western end through sand dunes and incredible mass of junk.

Vegetation: Catclaw, greasewood, some cacti, some grass, and some mesquite.

Archaeological Remains Noted: Junk encountered represents last few decades  
in Presidio. No evidence of earlier occupation except for one sherd of  
crockery, perhaps from Ojinaga.

Identified Site (number if known): none

New Site (field number): none

Shovel Tests Made (describe): none warranted

Specimens Noted or Collected: none

Photos Made: yes - J. C. Kelley Sketches (over) none

Comments: Sand dune area has obviously served until recently or continuing  
today, as a junkyard dump for Presidio. On evidence of essentially modern  
(last 50 years) materials represented, it does not represent an "old"  
Presidio dump.

PROJECT: PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION, CITY OF PRESIDIO,  
TEXAS, MARCH 1990, BLUE MOUNTAIN CONSULTANTS CONTRACT

DATE: MARCH 16 1990. Field Notes: Recorder E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Water Line: end of Line #1 and begin Line #2

Section: Unit #5 - two blocks west of Howard Street to International Bridge  
along highway into Mexico - return highway from International Bridge to Thompson  
~~Street~~ Street.

Stake Number(s) [if any located]: 82+00 to ???

OBSERVATIONS: (by whom): E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Terrain: From Howard Street to highway are deep sand dunes. Terrain drops off  
suddenly to floodplain under cultivation. Floodplain dug out about 8 feet or  
more on southeast side.

Vegetation: Dunes have catclaw, some grass, prickly pear. Floodplain under  
cultivation of some kind of domestic crop.

Archaeological Remains Noted: none

Identified Site (number if known): none

New Site (field number): none

Shovel Tests Made (describe): none warranted

Specimens Noted or Collected: none

Photos Made: yes - J. C. Kelley Sketches (over) none

Comments: This is highway right-of-way previously surveyed by highway  
archaeologists. They reported no archaeological materials in this area.  
Any present would have been destroyed by highway construction on side toward  
river and International Bridge.

PROJECT: PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION, CITY OF PRESIDIO, TEXAS, MARCH 1990, BLUE MOUNTAIN CONSULTANTS CONTRACT

DATE: MARCH 17 1990. Field Notes: Recorder E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Water Line: Line #2

Section: Unit #1 - corner of Thompson and Madero Streets eastward to dead end (six blocks).

Street: Madero Street

Stake Number(s) [if any located]: no numbered stakes found.

OBSERVATIONS: (by whom): E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Terrain: City street across almost southern end of outwash plain which forms terrace #1 in this area. Bladed street essentially level from one end to other.

Vegetation: All domestic vegetation in yards.

Archaeological Remains Noted: Madero Street midway of its length especially is bladed through what appears to be "old" Presidio dumps with sun-struck glass and crockery. However, plowing and road cutting have churned the old dump

Identified Site (number if known): no

New Site (field number): no

Shovel Tests Made (describe): no

Specimens Noted or Collected: Specimens noted: glass & crockery that may come from "old" Presidio dump. Now badly mixed & churned with recent dumping.

Photos Made: yes - J. C. Kelley Sketches (over) no

Comments: material into a mixture with modern dump material. Road surface is bladed 6-8 inches below the refuse-layered surface. The bladed road surface itself shows none of this refuse nor any prehistoric or early historic materials. Because of this and churning of deposits in adjacent vacant lots, this does not really constitute a viable archaeological site.

PROJECT: PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION, CITY OF PRESIDIO, TEXAS, MARCH 1990, BLUE MOUNTAIN CONSULTANTS CONTRACT

DATE: MARCH 17 1990. Field Notes: Recorder E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Water Line: Line #2

Section: Univ #2 - along one block south (actually a one block jog of Madero Street) along Juarez Street. Turn east & continue one long block to - Street.

~~XXXXXX~~: Turn left (north) one block to O'Reily Street.

Stake Number(s) [if any located]: no stakes

OBSERVATIONS: (by whom): E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Terrain: City street cut into slightly undulating outwash plain representing slightly eroded south edge of a low section of terrace #1. Materials through which road is bladed are sand & gravel.

Vegetation: Only domestic plants & trees in yards. In vacant lots are grasses and isolated catclaw.

Archaeological Remains Noted: Clearly a street of "old" Presidio. At western end after jog an adobe ruin from "old" Presidio stands on southeast corner of Madero. Blading of road & adjacent vacant lots obscures any archaeological

Identified Site (number if known): no

New Site (field number): no

Shovel Tests Made (describe): no. Blading of street at average of 6-8 inches below terrace surface obviates need for shovel testing.

Specimens Noted or Collected: none

Photos Made: yes - J. C. Kelley Sketches (over) no

~~Comments:~~ materials. Along this street of "old" Presidio actually there are other remains of adobe houses or foundations. Some of these will be destroyed by construction activities. Considering the condition of remaining structures it is our judgment that no mitigation is required, but this is a judgment that will have to be made in SHPO

PROJECT: PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION, CITY OF PRESIDIO,  
TEXAS, MARCH 1990, BLUE MOUNTAIN CONSULTANTS CONTRACT

DATE: MARCH 17 1990. Field Notes: Recorder E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Water Line: Line #3 - east section of town.

Section: Unit #1 - one block line running south along - street from O'Reilly  
Street.

Street: ?

Stake Number(s) [if any located]: no stakes

OBSERVATIONS: (by whom): E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Terrain: slightly hummocky natural surface of terrace #1 of Rio Grande.

Gravelly and sandy street bladed 6-10 inches below surface. This is a city  
street.

Vegetation: Grasses, greasewood along edge of vacant lot. Along east side of  
street domesticated planting in yards.

Archaeological Remains Noted: none

Identified Site (number if known): no site

New Site (field number): no

Shovel Tests Made (describe): no

Specimens Noted or Collected: none

Photos Made: yes - J. C. Kelley Sketches (over) no

Comments:

PROJECT: PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION, CITY OF PRESIDIO, TEXAS, MARCH 1990, BLUE MOUNTAIN CONSULTANTS CONTRACT

DATE: MARCH 17 1990. Field Notes: Recorder E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Water Line: Line #4

Section: Univ #1 - along O'Reilly Street at intersection of Tarver Street eastward & around turn to intersection with Unit #2.

Street: Along highway on soft shoulder on south and then west side.

Stake Number(s) [if any located]: no stakes

OBSERVATIONS: (by whom): E. Kelley & J. C. KELley

Terrain: Paved highway and city street running across the outwash plain of terrace #1 of Rio Grande. Exposed gravelly surface cut by blade.

Vegetation: Native vegetation only in vacant lots along unit. Greasewood and catclaw observed.

Archaeological Remains Noted: none

Identified Site (number if known): no site

New Site (field number): no

Shovel Tests Made (describe): no

Specimens Noted or Collected: none

Photos Made: yes - J. C. Kelley Sketches (over) no

Comments:

PROJECT: PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION, CITY OF PRESIDIO,  
TEXAS, MARCH 1990, BLUE MOUNTAIN CONSULTANTS CONTRACT

DATE: MARCH 17 1990. Field Notes: Recorder E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Water Line: Line #4

Section: Unit #2 - one block of Wilson Street running westward from highway.

Street: Wilson Street

Stake Number(s) [if any located]: no stakes until southwest corner of Unit #4.

OBSERVATIONS: (by whom): E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Terrain: City street across outwash plain. One long block crossed by arroyo  
about midway. Bladed below original surface of Terrace #1.

Vegetation: In vacant lots - greasewood, catclaw, weedy plants, grasses,  
some cacti.

Archaeological Remains Noted: none

Identified Site (number if known): no site

New Site (field number): no

Shovel Tests Made (describe): no

Specimens Noted or Collected: none

Photos Made: yes - J. C. Kelley Sketches (over) no

Comments: New advice runs Unit #2 from intersection of Wilson Street and  
highway eastward along Highway Department grounds, through heavy brush, through  
holding pens for railroad to southwest corner of Unit #4. Vegetation is  
heavy thicket of greasewood, cholla, catclaw, heavy grass clumps and cacti.  
Terrain is same outwash plain of Terrace #1. The surface is the gravel &  
cobble surface of the terrace. No archaeological evidence was seen.

PROJECT: PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION, CITY OF PRESIDIO,  
TEXAS, MARCH 1990, BLUE MOUNTAIN CONSULTANTS CONTRACT

DATE: MARCH 17-18 1990. Field Notes: Recorder E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Water Line: Line #4

Section: Unit #3 - eastward along road to city dump from its junction with  
Unit #4 to Alvarado Cattle Company.

Street: Runs along south side of city dump & Baeza Cattle Company to drop-off.

Stake Number(s) [if any located]: none

OBSERVATIONS: (by whom): E. Kelley & J. C. Kelley

Terrain: Country road bladed on natural gravel of terrace #1. Undulating  
slightly as it crosses low areas. Blading has cut into natural terrain on  
both sides exposing upper 6-10 inches.

Vegetation: Primarily greasewood and catclaw, some ocatillo and mesquite, cacti  
and high grass clumps, candilla.

Archaeological Remains Noted: none

Identified Site (number if known): no sites

New Site (field number): no

Shovel Tests Made (describe): no basis for testing

Specimens Noted or Collected: none

Photos Made: yes - J. C. Kelley Sketches (over) no

Comments: At Alvarado Cattle Company (end of unit) it runs through a large  
bladed area used by ranch. At western edge of this cleared area, the  
terrace drops off abruptly (about six feet) to a relatively broad draw (two  
branches of Tortola Arroyo) along the draw runs a spur of railroad. Drop-off  
into this draw begins Unit #5 which extends eastward to well site. Modern  
dumping on both sides of road. Modern ditching in various localities on south  
side of road.