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## A PRELIMINARY REPORT OF AN ARCHEOLOGICAL INVENTORY OF THE THURMOND RANCH, ROGER MILLS COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

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Since December of 1981, the authors have been conducting an informal inventory of archeological sites on the Thurmond Ranch in south-central Roger Mills County. The ranch comprises some 8370 acres west of U.S. Highway 283 and south of State Highway 47, about 5 miles southwest of Cheyenne. Approximately 20% of the ranch has been surveyed, with 40 aboriginal archeological sites and 2 bison bone localities recorded to date. Given the paucity of site distribution information available from western Oklahoma, we believe it would be useful to provide a brief summary of the reconnaissance results. A more detailed presentation is planned for a later date when the inventory has been completed.

The ranch is drained by 2 north-flowing tributaries of the Washita River, Brokenleg and Sergeant Major creeks. The eastern extremity of the Tertiary Ogallala Formation occupies the southwestern quarter of the ranch, whereas outcrops of Permian shales and sandstones of the Doxey and Cloud Chief formations occur across its remainder. Numerous freshwater springs emerge along the Ogallala-Doxey contact, providing perennial flow along most of the major streams. The landscape has been dissected by steep-walled, narrow canyons and draws to produce a rough, broken topography. Relief of 10 to 15 meters is common along the major canyons. The Ogallala outcrop is associated with a dominant vegetation of bluestem, sand dropseed, and various species of shinnery oak. The Permian outcrop areas are more commonly associated with buffalo grass, several grama species, yucca, and catclaw acacia. Elm, cottonwood, walnut, willow, hackberry, chinaberry, and locust form narrow woodland belts along the canyons. Although some of the level ridgetops have been cultivated in the past, the ranch is now entirely in pasture.

Terrace profiles on the ranch suggest that the present highly dissected topography is a relatively recent phenomenon. Two successive paleosols are visible in many high valley fill remnants. These strata are similar in depth and thickness to the paleosols described by Ferring (1982) for Delaware Canyon, some 90 miles to the southwest. The Delaware Canyon paleosols have been radiocarbon dated at A.D. 1350 to A.D. 1450 for the upper unit and A.D. 50 to A.D. 990 for the lower unit. As at Delaware Canyon, materials diagnostic of the Plains Village

period are associated with the upper ranch paleosol. Late Archaic dart points and modern bison bone have been recovered from the lower ranch paleosol. Stream entrenchment within the last 100 years is indicated. Although incision along the mainstem of Sergeant Major Creek appears to have been no greater than 3 meters since Plains Village times, headward erosion has resulted in gullies 6 to 10 meters deep along many of the tributary drainages.

Archeological sites on the upland surfaces tend to be deflated, whereas those within the canyons are frequently buried and visible only in scarp exposures or downslope concentrations of displaced artifacts. In the uplands, numerous concentrations of habitation debris (chipped and ground stone tools, lithic debitage, and burned rock) occur near spring-fed drainages along the Ogallala-Doxey contact border. These assemblages are dense and often cover several thousand square meters in area. Local lithic resources comprise the materials utilized at these sites, with cobbles of Ogallala quartzite and Alibates chert the most common. North of the Ogallala-Doxey line, habitation areas are sparsely scattered and tend to be more ephemeral. Numerous large quarry/workshops occur throughout the ranch on upland slopes and ridgetops in association with lag deposits of Ogallala Formation gravels. Such sites are particularly numerous within 1 or 2 miles of the areas where the Ogallala feathers out.

Sites within the canyons are more difficult to assess due to their buried condition. Burned rock, bison bone, chipped stone debris, and chipped and ground stone tools are among the materials most frequently found eroding from the valley fill remnants. Two isolated human burials are known from such contexts.

Chronological classification of the sites recorded to date have been summarized in Table 1 using the cultural sequences outlined in Baugh (1984:19-29).

Table 1. Cultural Classification of the Thurmond Ranch Sites.

Late Plains Village (?)	1	(3%)
Early Plains Village	2	(5%)
Incipient Plains Village	2	(5%)
Archaic	10	(25%)
Paleo-Indian (Plano Horizon)	2	(5%)
Unassigned Prehistoric	23	(57%)
Total Sites Recorded	40	

The assignment of a single site to the Late Plains Village sub-period (A.D. 1750 to A.D. 1875) is tenuous, at best, since it is based on a surface find of one metal arrowpoint. Two sites defined as belonging to the Early Plains Village sub-period (A.D. 1100 to 1450) yielded several sherds of Quartermaster Plain and Lindsay Plain pottery. Two Incipient Plains Village (A.D. 100 to 1100) sites have been identified by the recovery of Scallorn projectile points.

Ten localities on the ranch have been assigned to the Archaic period based on the recovery of a variety of dart points, including Ensor, Lange, Marcos, Marshall, Palmillas, Williams, and unassigned corner-notched. Absolute dates for Archaic occupations are problematic in western Oklahoma due to the lack of relevant information. In central Texas, Prewitt (1981) considers dart points of the Ensor, Lange, Marcos, Marshall, and Williams types to be diagnostic of the San Marcos, Uvalde, and Twin Sisters phases of the Archaic, dating ca. 650 B.C. to A.D. 200. In northwestern Texas, Lange, Marcos, and Williams dart points are considered indicative of the Late Archaic (ca. 1000 B.C.), with the Terminal Archaic (ca. A.D. 1) represented by Ensor and Palmillas points (Etchieson, Speer, and Hughes 1978:86). One may tentatively conclude that the Archaic components on the Thurmond Ranch are relatively late, perhaps dating after 1000 B.C.

The recovery of lanceolate Meserve and Plainview projectile points from two sites indicates a Paleo-Indian occupation (Plano Horizon). These points are representative of sites which date between 8000 B.C. and 6000 B.C. (Holliday et al. 1983). It should be noted that seven of the Unassigned Prehistoric locations yield lithic debitage and materials quite similar to those of adjacent Archaic sites.

The chronological composition of the site sample from the Thurmond Ranch forms a striking contrast to the results of a survey recently performed along Quartermaster Creek (Moore 1984), a primary tributary of the Washita River located 20 miles east of the Thurmond Ranch and 5 miles southwest of Leedey. Table 2 provides a list of the prehistoric sites recorded within the Quartermaster Creek watershed as a comparison with the Thurmond Ranch sites.

Table 2. Cultural Classification of Prehistoric Sites on Quartermaster Creek.

Archaic/Incipient Plains Village	1	(2%)
Archaic/Plains Village	1	(2%)
Incipient Plains Village	10	(16%)
Incipient Plains Village/Plains Village	1	(2%)
Plains Village	11	(18%)
Unassigned Prehistoric	39	(60%)

Although very few Archaic components have been identified along Quartermaster Creek, a substantial number of Incipient Plains Village and Plains Village components are present. As mentioned earlier, this is quite different from the Thurmond Ranch sites which are primarily Archaic.

In addition, the function composition of sites recorded on Quartermaster Creek are quite different from those on the Thurmond Ranch. Following the classification established by Moore (1984:64-65), a comparison of the Thurmond Ranch and Quartermaster Creek site types is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of Site Types From the Thurmond Ranch and Quartermaster Creek.

Site Type	Thurmond Ranch	Quartermaster Creek
Village	0 (0%)	7 (12%)
Type A Base Camp	0 (0%)	7 (12%)
Type B Base Camp	10 (25%)	6 (10%)
Secondary Camp	21 (55%)	25 (40%)
Quarry/Workshop	9 (22%)	16 (26%)
Total Sites	40	61

An obvious difference between the two areas is the absence of more permanent occupations (villages and Type A base camps) on the Thurmond Ranch. The high number of Archaic sites on the ranch may influence this absence, since Archaic people are generally thought to be less sedentary than later Incipient Plains Village and Plains Village groups. All of the villages and Type A base camps within the Quartermaster Creek watershed date to the Incipient Plains Village and Plains Village periods.

In summary, Archaic utilization of the Quartermaster Creek area appears to have been minimal, with fairly intensive habitation from Incipient Plains Village through Plains Village times. The picture from the ranch is exactly the opposite, with fairly intense Late Archaic habitation and very little Late Prehistoric utilization. Again, these survey areas are centered on tributaries of the Washita River just 20 miles apart. Although we have just begun to address the problem, we are inclined to believe that differences in topography, soil composition, and floral species mix between the two areas may be responsible for this apparent dichotomy.

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