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Langtry Creek Burial Cave, Val Verde County, Texas

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ABSTRACT

A small rockshelter in southwestern Val Verde County, Texas contained skeletal material of six individuals. It apparently was used solely as a burial chamber. The few artifacts found among the human bones suggest that the burials may date from the Late Archaic period. Probable burial customs are suggested, and anthropometrical and morphological data concerning the skeletal remains are presented.

INTRODUCTION

In March, 1962, a small rockshelter with human bones eroding from the front of the deposit was discovered and designated 41VV258 in The University of Texas county numbering system for archeological sites. A metal pipe which had been used for climbing into the shelter indicated that pothunters knew of the site. Therefore, on September 29, 1962, a crew consisting of John Greer, Bob and Alice Benfer, Lee Huddleston, and Peggy Walkington, all students from The University of Texas, carried out complete excavation of the site. The material recovered includes skeletal remains of six individuals, one dart point, one sandal fragment, one rabbit stick, three basketry fragments, four siliceous stone fragments, miscellaneous, unmodified plant remains, and a few small animal bones.

Thanks go to Boy Babb, the landowner, and to Mr. Randall, who is now leasing the land and who granted permission for excavation. Criticisms, suggestions, and general help from Alice Benfer, T. N. Campbell, E. Mott Davis, Edward B. Jelks, T. W. McKern, John P. Nunley, Harry J. Shafer, Dee Ann Story, and Curtis D. Tunnell have been greatly appreciated.

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF SITE

41 VV 258 is located in the southwestern corner of Val Verde County (Fig. 1), at the upper end of the proposed Amistad Reservoir. The

shelter is situated in a low bluff just west of Langtry Creek. The creek is normally dry—although a few potholes often contain water—and the channel is rather wide and shallow.

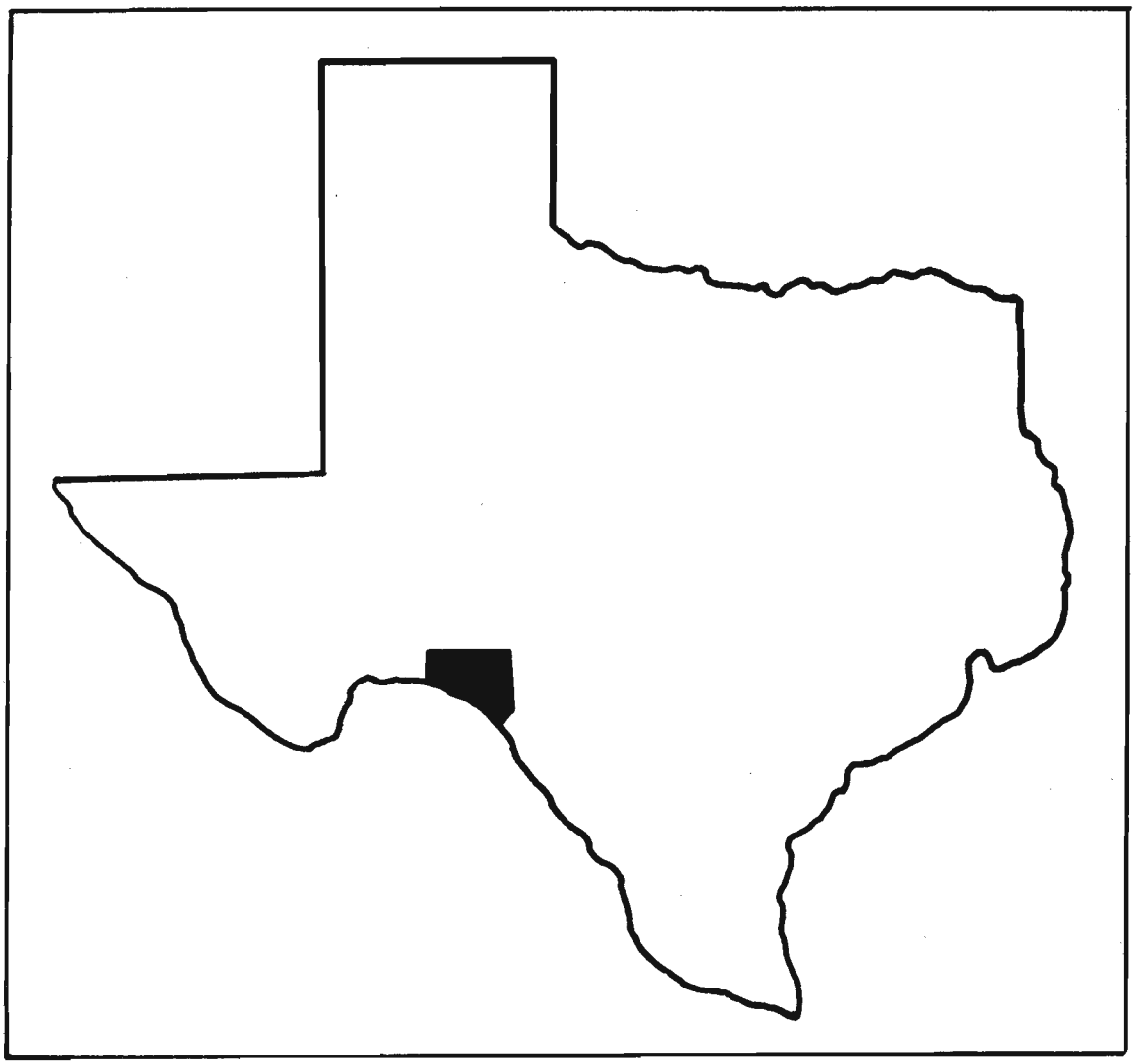

Fig. 1. Location of Val Verde County.

In the vicinity of the site, Langtry Creek is bounded on the east side by two alluvial terraces, the surfaces of which have yielded abundant archeological materials, including eroded hearths and other midden debris.* On the west side of the creek is a low terrace behind which is a bluff. The bluff is approximately a quarter of a mile long and aver-

* The most notable site (41 VV 259), probably unrelated to Langtry Creek Burial Cave, is located on the upper terrace about 250 yards south of the shelter. It consists of one, and possibly a second, circular burned rock midden of the type commonly referred to a "doughnut midden" or "sotol pit," because of the characteristic depression in the center (Fig. 2, B).

ages about 30 feet in height. It contains many small solution pockets forming shelters in the conglomerate and limestone. The site reported herein is in one of these limestone solution pockets (Fig. 2, A).

Langtry Creek Burial Cave actually consists of three small shelters, one above the other (Fig. 2, A). The top shelter or room alone contained the skeletal remains and artifacts (Fig. 3). The sloping bedrock floor of the middle shelter was covered with approximately one inch of sterile limestone dust. Althought not tested, there were no surface indications of occupation in the bottom cavity. The upper room is 13 feet above the ground, 13 feet wide at the mouth, 13 feet deep, and has an average ceiling height above the rock floor of three feet (Fig. 3). At present there is no natural access to the upper room.

The stratigraphy in the burial section (upper shelter) was rather simple, as only nine to 14 inches of deposit covered the floor. Two zones of limestone dust and roof spalls were separated by a layer of smooth stones. The lowest six inches consisted of a light gray to tan gritty dust, and contained all of the bones and all but one of the artifacts (Fig. 3). On top of this lower zone was an almost continuous layer of stream worn rock brought in from the creek bed to cover the burials. Many of these rocks were large and flat (14 inches in diameter, three inches thick), and the areas between them were filled with smaller smooth pebbles. No traces of paint were noted on the pebbles, although many had been burned. Above the layer of rocks was a thin, two to four inches thick, layer of white limestone dust and ceiling spalls. A similar white dust layer can be observed in many of the shelters in this area.

EXCAVATION

Because of the limited time available, excavation techniques were not as rigorous as might be desired. Moreover, due to mechanical failure of the camera, none of the many photographs taken in the shelter during excavation are suitable for reproduction.

In brief, the surface dust was removed in sections, thus uncovering the layer of rocks. Next the rocks and portions of the underlying deposit were removed and the bones exposed. The bones were cleared with trowels and brushes, and were left in their original position until their relative location could be determined. It was hoped that separate individuals could be distinguished in the field. This was not possible, as all the bones except those of one individual were in no order and appeared to have been scattered when buried. The bones were removed without recording their relative positions and the deposit was not

screened. Because frequent profiles and characteristics of individual layers were recorded, statements concerning the nature, uniformity, and relative position of the layers are possible.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE BURIALS

The burial area for the six individuals was in the front half of the upper shelter and was bounded in the back by a ledge one foot high. This small area was approximately five and a half feet in diameter (Fig. 3). The human remains were found on or near bedrock, and were covered with a layer of smooth stones. The artifacts recovered during excavation include a dart point, a sandal fragment, a rabbit stick, and three small basket or mat fragments.

The burials include five adults and one adolescent. The bones of the five adults seemed to be randomly scattered throughout the burial area. Certainly, none of the individuals were in anatomical order, except for the adolescent, a female which was partially articulated in a semi-flexed position. The latter skeleton was found at the back of the burial area, near the main ledge (Fig. 3). The five adults were evidently placed in the cave over a relatively short period of time, either as primary (in the flesh) or, more likely, as secondary burials. The sixth was clearly buried in the flesh and was possibly interred somewhat later.

It should be noted that the bones could have been scattered to some extent by pothunters or pack rats. Evidence for disturbance includes the presence of the metal pipe; the finding of frayed newspaper fragments around and beneath some of the smooth stones in front, on the south side of the burial area; two skull fragments found on the surface; and the incompleteness of some of the skeletons. Among the bones missing were a skull, numerous teeth, vertebrae, and ribs. On the other hand, the partially articulated skeleton of the young female, the relative uniformity of the deposit, and the presence of the rabbit stick, suggest that the disturbance was limited to the front and southeastern corner of the burial area.

The burial customs observed at Langtry Creek Burial Cave have also been noted at other shelters in various parts of Texas. Because of the widespread occurrence of multiple burials, little can be inferred from this trait, although it might be pointed out that Pearce and Jackson (1933: 66) report a multiple burial (four individuals) from the Fate Bell Rockshelter in southern Val Verde County. Similarly, basketry or matting associated with burials has also been recorded for a number

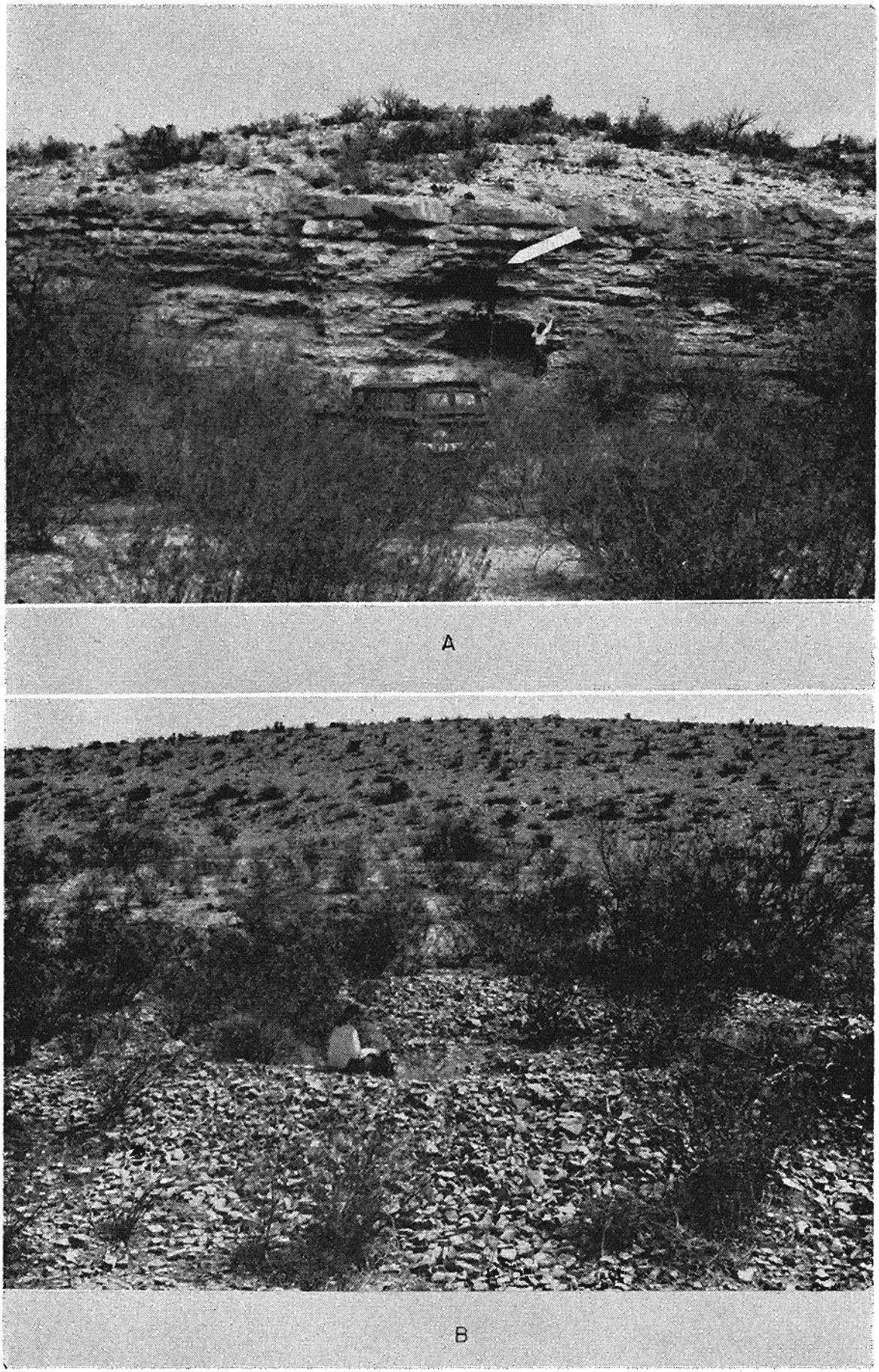

Fig. 2. A, Langtry Creek Burial Cave (41 VV 258), looking west. B, Sotol pit (41 VV 259), looking east.

of sites in Val Verde County, including Coontail Spin Rockshelter (John P. Nunley, personal communication), the Shumla caves (Martin, n.d.; Schuetz, 1963), Fate Bell Rockshelter (Pearce and Jackson, 1933), and Horseshoe Cave [also known as Kelly's Shelter or Mrs. Martin Kelly Ranch (Butler, 1948; Woolsey, ms.; Lehmer, 1960)]. According to Richard Smith and Ed McCarson (Pearce and Jackson, 1933: 14), most burials in the area have . . . "small baskets over the skulls and large baskets or mats over the entire skeleton." This trait is also reported for Ceremonial Cave in El Paso County (Alves, 1930), Caldwell Cave No. 2 and Shelby Brooks Cave in Culberson County (Jackson, 1937), and Bee Cave in Brewster County (Coffin, 1932).

The practice of covering burials with rocks or manos and metates also occurs widely. It has been reported for Val Verde County at the Coontail Spin Shelter (Nunley, personal communication) and the Fate Bell Rockshelter (Pearce and Jackson, 1933). In addition, it has been described for west and central Texas: Brewster County (Coffin, 1932), Taylor County (Ray, 1933), Stephens County (Ray, 1931), Travis County (Mike Flynn, personal communication), Bell County (Harry Shafer, personal communication), Hill County (Jelks, 1962), Coryell County (Ramseur, ms.), Llano County (Jackson, 1938), San Saba County (Jackson, 1938), and Burnet County (Field, 1956).

DESCRIPTION OF THE ARTIFACTS

Dart Point (Fig. 4, B)

One small dart point (4.6 cm. long, 3.0 cm. wide, and 0.6 cm. thick at the stem) was found in the center of the shelter, among the bones. It is classified as *Edgewood* (Suhm and Jelks, 1962: 183–184) because of its triangular blade, concave base, definite barbs, and expanding stem formed by corner notches.

Suhm, Krieger, and Jelks (1954: 418) indicate that the *Edgewood* type probably dates from the latter part of the Archaic Stage. *Edgewood* points from the Devil's Mouth Site in Val Verde County were found to be stratigraphically late, dating from what Johnson (1962: 55, Fig. 25) has termed the Late Archaic period. At the Castle Canyon Site, 41 VV 7 (report in progress by Greer), *Edgewood* points were found in levels containing *Ensor*, *Frio*, and *Fairland* dart points, and *Toyah* and *Perdiz*-like arrow points. Data from Castle Canyon suggest that *Edgewood* could have extended into the Neo-American Stage. If correct, then the *Edgewood* point from Langtry Creek Burial Cave could date any time from the latter part of the Archaic into Neo-American times.

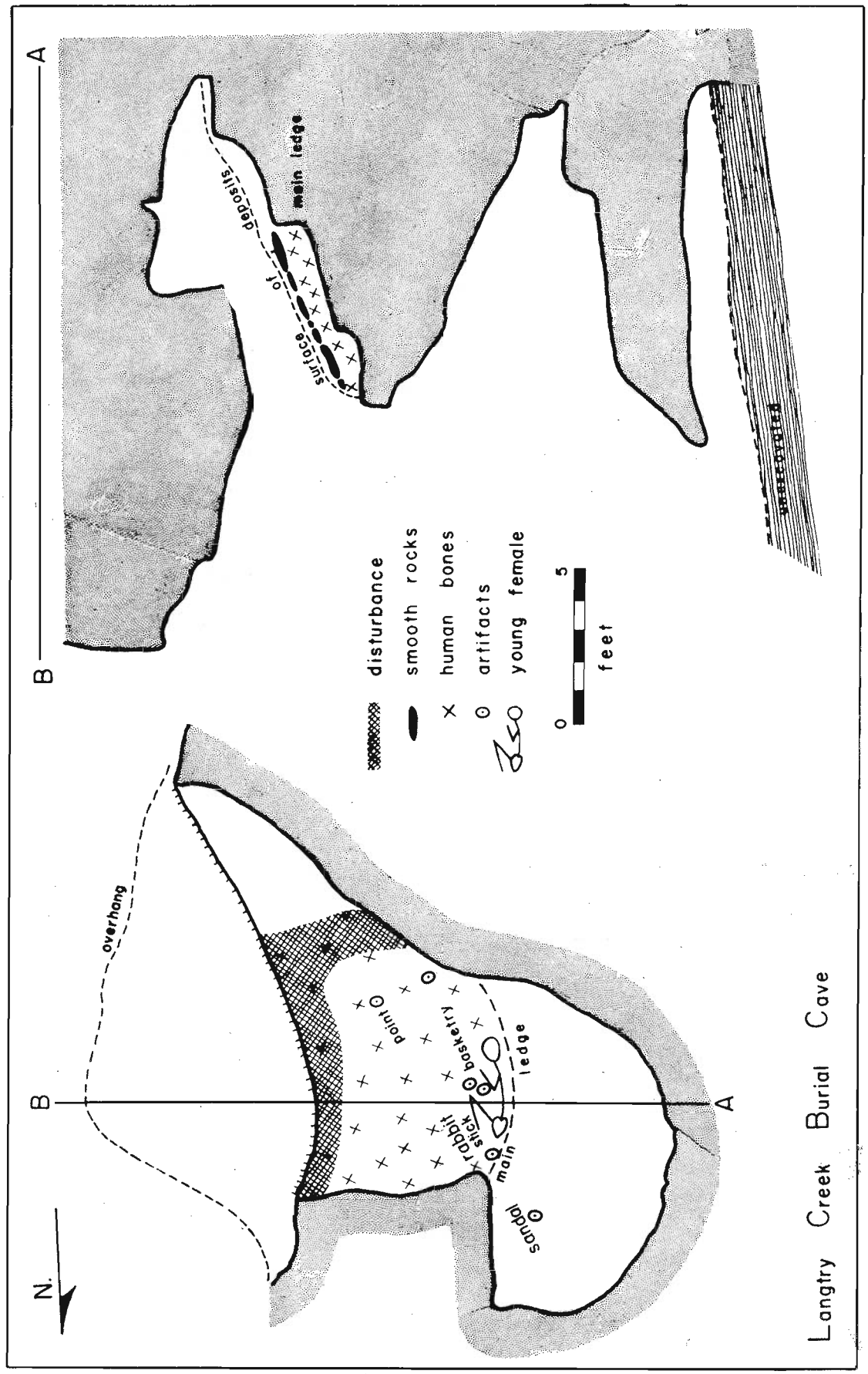

Fig. 3. Langtry Creek Burial Cave. A, Floor plan. B, Cross section.

Sandal

One sandal fragment, about one third complete, was found resting on bedrock behind the burial area, two feet from the edge of the main ledge, and about two and one half feet from the rabbit stick (Fig. 3). The sandal consists of a distal fragment, rather crudely made of frayed lechuguilla leaves. It is about 12.0 cm. wide and about 1.2 cm. thick. No tie strings were found with this specimen.

The technique of manufacture probably corresponds to Schuetz's (1956: 130, Pl. 14, B) Type B, bent frame, sole construction. Apparently this type of construction is well represented in Val Verde County. The sandals from the Fate Bell Shelter are almost all of this type. They were found in the rich fiber zone in the upper 18 inches of the deposit. The relative shallowness of this zone at Fate Bell, and at many other sites in the area, suggests that it may be fairly recent, dating any time during, or after, the latter part of the Archaic.

Rabbit Stick (Fig. 4, A, A′)

One small rabbit stick was found in an upright position against the ledge at the back of the burial area, near the young female skeleton (Fig. 3). On the upper face of the stick are two separate groups of longitudinal grooves which begin at the base of the handle. The underside of the stick is partially rotted, but still shows remains of a group of four grooves, possibly running the entire length of the specimen. The handle is circumscribed (and distinguished) by at least 19 cuts.

This small, relatively straight stick is 34.1 cm. long and 1.8 cm. thick. The width ranges from 2.6 cm. at the handle (proximal end) to 2.8 cm. at the distal end. On both faces the lengthwise grooves are 0.1 to 0.2 cm. wide and about 0.1 cm. deep. On the upper face (Fig. 4, A) three grooves begin at the handle (3.1 cm. from the proximal end) and are 12.3 cm. long. This group is 0.6 to 0.8 cm. wide. A small gap of 1.2 cm. separates this group from a group of four grooves at least 16.0 cm. long. The latter group is 1.1 cm. wide in the center of the stick (proximal end of the grooves) to 0.8 cm. wide at the distal end. The underside of the rabbit stick (Fig. 4, A′) is decayed, but nonetheless slight differences in the design are noticeable. The damaged face has a group (0.8 cm. wide) of four roughly parallel grooves beginning at the handle and probably continuing the entire length.

The dating of rabbit sticks is a problem since they have not yet been recovered from well-stratified sites in Texas. At Fate Bell, a rabbit stick was found in the upper part of the deposit, only 14 inches below

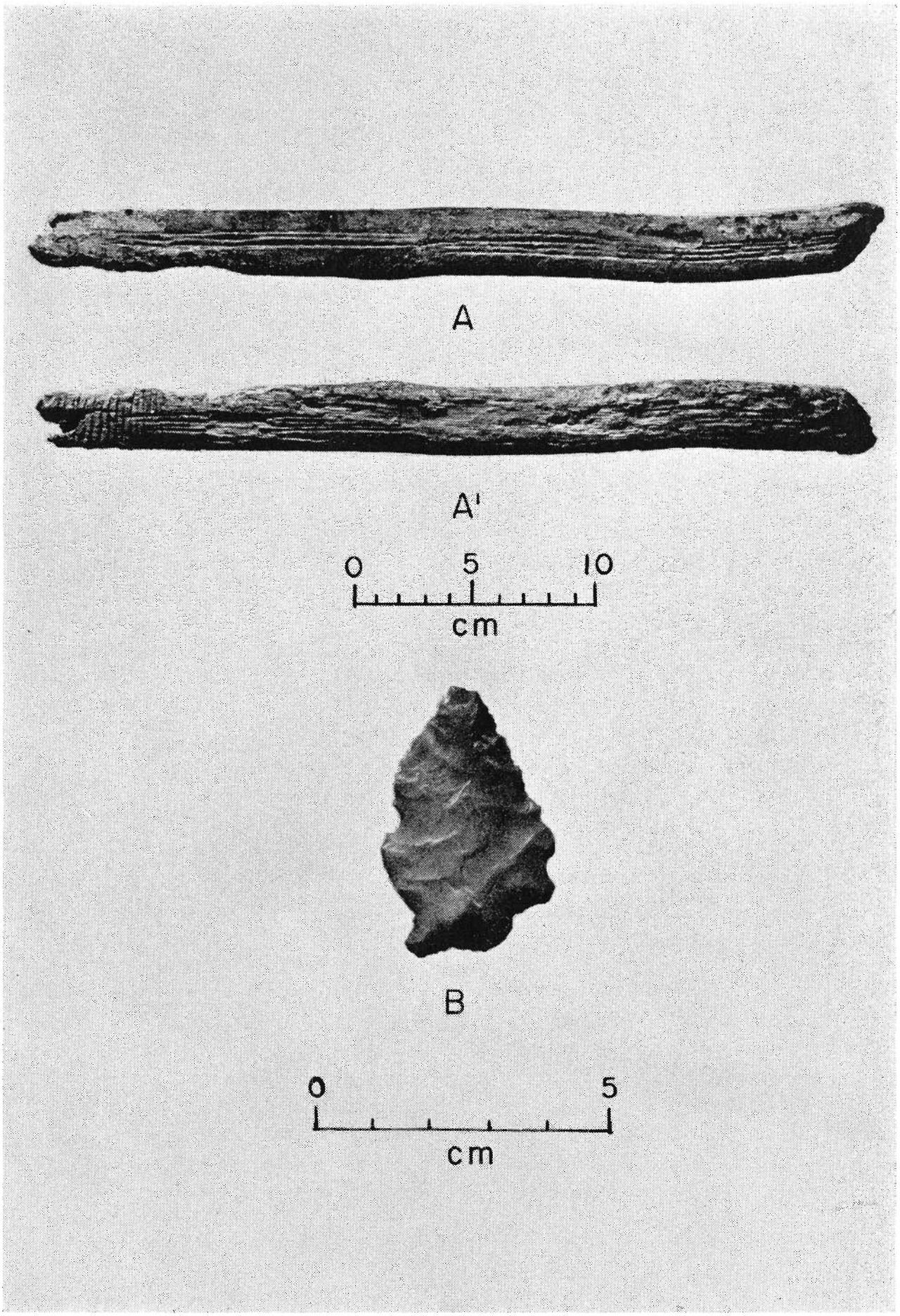

Fig. 4. Artifacts. A, A', Rabbit stick. B, *Edgewood* dart point.

the surface, in the fiber zone (Pearce and Jackson, 1933: 44). Rabbit sticks from Candelaria Cave in Coahuila, Mexico (Aveleyra, *et al.*, 1956: Lam. IX, 83) were found with an *Ensor* dart point fragment, a Late Archaic type (Johnson, 1962: 56), and two small side-notched arrow points. On the other hand, at Horseshoe Cave (Butler, 1948; Woolsey, ms.) rabbit sticks were found in the same deposit as *Langtry* points, a type which appears to be older than *Ensor* (Johnson, 1962: 63). Significantly, no Late Archaic projectile points were recovered from Horseshoe Cave. George Pappas who is digging a shelter in Mexico, just across from the mouth of the Pecos River, reports (personal communication) finding a rabbit stick handle in levels containing *Langtry* and *Shumla* points. While the last two associations are not conclusive, it is quite possible that rabbit sticks may be proven to date earlier than the Late Archaic. Ethnographic data from the Southwest (Parry, 1876: 398; Beaglehole, 1936: 17; Gifford, 1940: 31, 33) indicate that rabbit sticks continued to be used by the Pueblo Indians well into historic times.

Basketry

Three very small basketry or matting fragments, each approximately 2.5 cm. square, were found in the burial area. Two were directly above a tibia and approximately two feet south of the rabbit stick. They are simple over-under weave, so-called "checkerwork" (Pearce and Jackson, 1933: 108). Because of the fragmentary condition of these specimens nothing definite can be said concerning the size or shape of the original baskets or mats. The fragments appear to have been made from fine, small sotol leaves of two different sizes: 0.2 cm. and 0.3 to 0.4 cm. wide.

NON-ARTIFACTUAL DEBRIS

In addition to the artifacts and human skeletal material, a few miscellaneous, unaltered specimens were found during the excavation. Plant remains include a few lechuguilla fragments, stick fragments, unidentified seeds and pods, and 28 small walnuts. Also recovered were a few small rodent(?) bones. Siliceous stones from the shelter include a small fragment of dark agate or petrified wood, 1.5 cm. long, and three fragments of siliceous limestone similar to crude chert. The latter are probably spalls from the walls of the shelter.

ANALYSIS OF HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS

The need for documentation of all skeletal material, regardless of sample size, has previously been noted from the central Texas area (McKern, 1962: 105). This statement is equally true of other parts of Texas. Accordingly, anthropometric data and descriptive observations for the six individuals excavated from Langtry Creek Burial Cave, Val Verde County, are presented here. Some inferences concerning approximate age at the time of death, sex, stature, and muscularity are also drawn from the skeletal remains.

Materials and Methods

The six individuals consisted of the following skeletal material: Individual No. 2146,* a 33 year old male, was represented by a fragmentary skull, mandible, a clavicle, a complete pelvis, and long bones of the lower extremities. The second male, Individual No. 2150, was composed of a complete femur and tibia, a fragmentary humerus, and fragmentary long bones of the lower extremities. This individual was 30 years old at the time of death. A 40 year old female, No. 2145, was represented by a complete skull without mandible, long bones of the upper and lower extremities, and pelvic bones. An adolescent female, No. 2147, was represented by a fragmentary skull without a mandible, fragments of both radii, an ulna, a right humerus, and a complete left humerus. All the ribs and vertebrae of this 15 year old girl were present. Bones of the lower extremities were present and complete, although some foot bones and the fibulae were too broken for restoration. Another female (No. 2148), 24 years old at the time of death, was composed of a few skull fragments, a right humerus and left radius, two femora, a tibia, and a sacrum. The last female (No. 2149), 22 years old, was represented by a few skull fragments, a right femur, right and left tibae, and a right innominate bone. A few mandible fragments, not easily assignable to any individual, were also present. In general, very few hand and foot bones were recovered, and the only ribs or vertebrae present were those of the 15 year old girl.

Since the skeletal material from the shelter was intermixed, the skeletons had to be separated into individuals on the basis of bone morphology; sex and age, as far as they could be determined from single bones; general size and shape of the bones; and, occasionally, color of the bones.

* Skeletal catalogue numbers refer to data sheets on file at the Physical Anthropology Laboratory, Department of Anthropology, The University of Texas.

Age was estimated by using criteria suggested by McKern (ms.), while the sex identifications are based on criteria suggested by Montagu (1960). After sorting, the bones were measured and observations were made on the standard forms used by The University of Texas. All measurements (Table 1) and observations (Table 2) correspond to those defined by Montagu (1960) and Hrdlička (1952). Means and standard deviations were not computed since most of the categories include only one or two individuals. Postcranial indices were computed only when bones were from the same side of the skeleton; e.g., right tibia and right femur. Observations were rated on a scale of *0* to 5, with *3* representing the average. Stature (Table 4) was computed by using the Mongoloid formulae of Trotter and Gleser (1958: 111).

Anthropometric Data and Observations

The measurements are presented in Table 1. Stewart (1935: 215, Table 1) has reported on cranial measurements of skulls from Val Verde County (Goat Cave, Moorehead Cave, Shumla caves, and Satan Canyon) and Culberson County (Van Horn), and the female measurements are presented here (Table 3) for comparison with Individual No. 2145, the one skull from Langtry Creek Burial Cave which was in good condition. A general similarity is noticeable, but no further statements are possible at the present time. There are no published descriptions available for postcranial material from the area.

Two females (Nos. 2145 and 2147) and one male (No. 2146) had skulls complete enough to suggest dolichocrany (No. 2145 had a cranial index of 73.2). In general, the skulls appeared to be small, with 1200 cc. being the estimated capacity for No. 2145. The cranial capacity was determined by filling the skulls with seeds, then measuring the resultant volume.

The skulls were lightly muscled (for example, see Fig. 5, A, B), especially in comparison with long bone musculature of the same individuals. In general, the musculature is not quite so pronounced as that of material from central Texas, an area which is close geographically and similar culturally (Campbell, 1957: 22–23). The skull of Individual No. 2145 (female), was characterized by a short and narrow face (Fig. 5, B). The orbits are low and rectangular, and seem large in comparison to the small face.

A few surviving teeth (those of the male No. 2146) were worn, but not excessively. Only two small cavities were present, on the right and left first maxillary molars. All but the second molars of the mandible had been lost during life. Individual No. 2145 also had ante-mortum

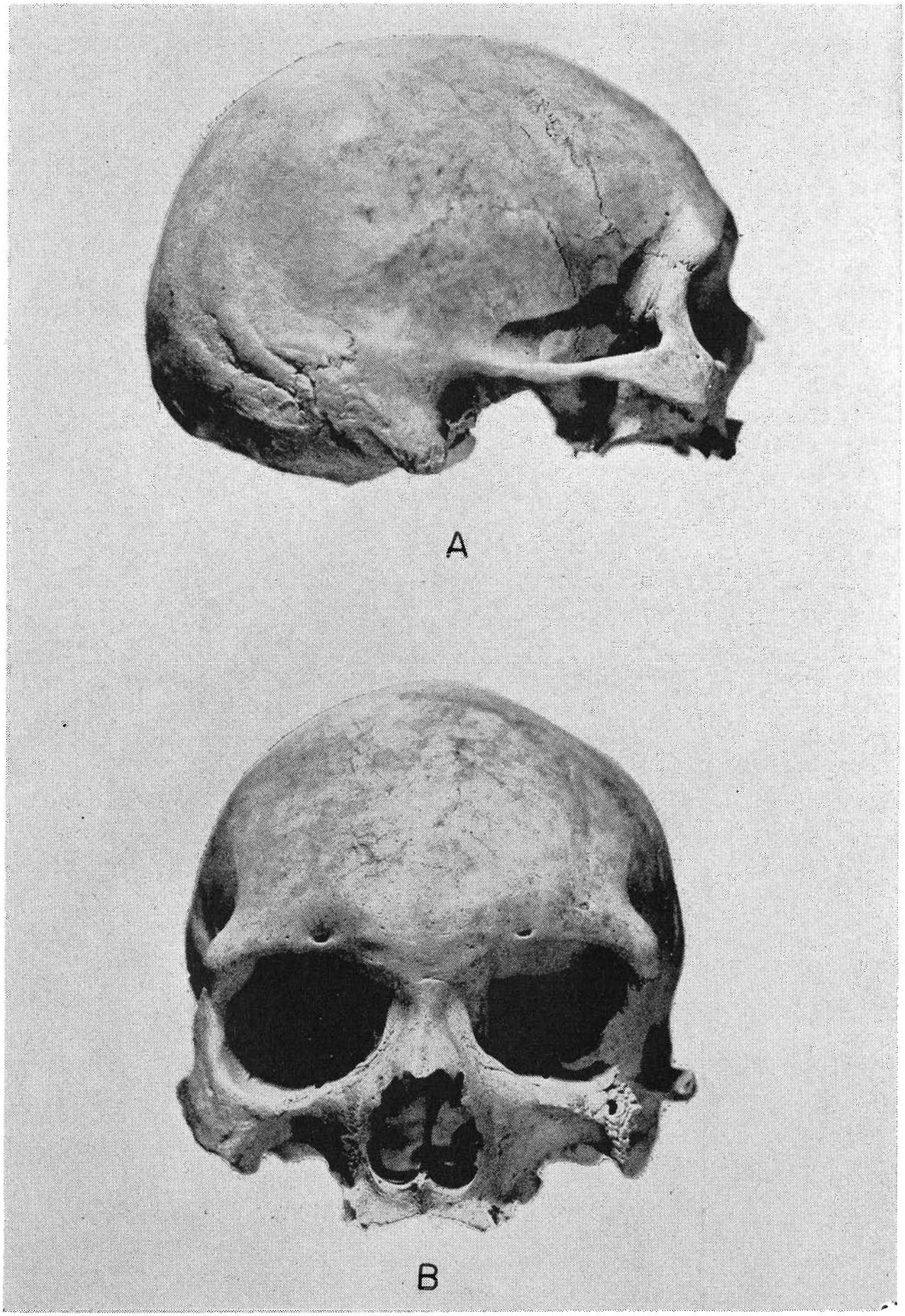

Fig. 5. Skull of 40 year old female (No. 2145). A, Side view. B, Front view.

TABLE 1

Langtry Creek Skeletal Material: Measurements and Indices[1]

Individuals	2146	2150	2145	2147	2148	2149
Sex	*Male*	*Male*	*Female*	*Female*	*Female*	*Female*
Age	33	30	40	15	24	22
			Cranial			
Cranial capacity	...	...	1200cc.	...	...	...
Maximum length	190	...	183	176	...	...
Maximum breadth	*140	...	134	...	...	...
Basion-bregma	...	...	125	...	...	...
Auricular height	...	...	107	...	...	...
Left parietal	...	...	5	...	...	...
Minimum frontal	...	...	94	95	...	...
Bizygomatic diameter	...	...	113	...	...	...
Nasal height	...	...	50	...	...	...
Nasal breadth	...	...	25	...	...	...
Interorbital breadth	...	...	22	...	...	...
Basion-nasion	...	...	98	...	...	...
Orbital height, left	...	...	33	...	...	...
Orbital height, right	...	...	34	...	...	...
Orbital breadth, left	...	...	44	...	...	...
Orbital breadth, right	...	...	...	...	...	...
Palate breadth	65	...	...	...	...	...
Palate length	52	...	...	...	...	...
Indices						
Cranial	...	...	73.2	...	...	...
Length-height	...	...	68.3	...	...	...
Breadth-height	...	...	93.3	...	...	...
Cranial module	...	...	147.3	...	...	...
Nasal	...	...	50.0	...	...	...
Orbital	...	...	76.1	...	...	...
Palate	125	...	...	...	...	...
			Postcranial			
Humerus, right						
Maximum length	...	...	...	...	302	...
Maximum middle diam.	...	...	...	...	18	...
Minimum middle diam.	...	...	...	...	12	...
Maximum diameter of head	...	...	...	...	38	...
Minimum circumference	...	...	...	...	50	...
Middle index	...	...	...	...	66.7	...
Humeral-femoral index	...	...	...	...	...	...
Robusticity index	...	...	...	...	16.6	...
Humerus, left						
Maximum length	...	...	288	265	...	...
Maximum middle diam.	...	...	18	16	...	...
Minimum middle diam.	...	...	15	12	...	...
Maximum diameter of head	...	...	37	38	...	...

TABLE 1—Continued

Langtry Creek Skeletal Material: Measurements and Indices[1]

Individuals	2146	2150	2145	2147	2148	2149
Sex	*Male*	*Male*	*Female*	*Female*	*Female*	*Female*
Age	33	30	40	15	24	22
Minimum circumference	...	51	52	45	...	...
Middle index	...	...	83.3	75.0	...	...
Humeral-femoral index	...	...	67.4	...	...	
Robusticity index	...	...	18.1	17.0	...	...
Radius, left						
Maximum length	...	...	...	...	228	...
Ulna, right						
Maximum length	...	...	252	...	...	...
Clavicle, right						
Maximum length	134	...	...	...	...	...
Femur, right						
Bicondylar length	449	...	...	393	...	...
Maximum length	451	...	...	401	...	...
Maximum diameter of head	45	...	...	41	42	43
Subtrochanteric diameter, anterior-posterior	24	...	...	20	20	22
Subtrochanteric diameter, lateral	31	...	...	27	30	29
Middle diameter, anterior-posterior	25	...	...	24	*25	...
Middle diameter, lateral	31	...	...	23	*25	...
Minimum circumference	85	...	...	73	78	80
Platymeric index	77.4	...	...	74.1	66.7	75.9
Middle index	124.0	...	...	95.8	*100.0	...
Robusticity index	12.5	...	...	12.0	...	...
Femur, left						
Bicondylar length	...	455	427	...	...	...
Maximum length	...	460	430	...	...	...
Maximum diameter of head	45	46	43	40	42	...
Subtrochanteric diameter, anterior-posterior	25	*31	24	22	21	...
Subtrochanteric diameter, lateral	32	*32	29	28	31	...
Middle diameter, anterior-posterior	...	32	27	...	*25	...
Middle diameter, lateral	...	27	25	...	*25	...
Minimum circumference	...	89	80	73	78	...
Platymeric index	78.1	*96.9	82.8	78.6	67.7	...
Middle index	...	84.4	92.6	...	*100.0	...
Robusticity index	...	13.0	12.2	...	...	...
Tibia, right						
Maximum length	385	355	*355	...	393	*354
Middle diameter,						

TABLE 1—Continued

Langtry Creek Skeletal Material: Measurements and Indices[1]

Individuals	2146	2150	2145	2147	2148	2149
Sex	*Male*	*Male*	*Female*	*Female*	*Female*	*Female*
Age	33	30	40	15	24	22
anterior-posterior	30	31	27	25	33	27
Middle diameter, lateral	22	23	21	19	24	20
Nutrient foramen diameter, anterior-posterior	36	38	32	31	41	32
Nutrient foramen diameter, lateral	21	24	22	21	25	22
Minimal circumference	78	79	74	68	82	72
Middle index	73.3	74.2	77.8	76.0	72.7	74.1
Platycnemic index	58.3	63.2	68.8	67.7	60.9	68.8
Length-thickness index	20.3	22.3	*20.8	. . .	20.9	*20.3
Tibio-femoral index	85.8	. . .	. . .	. . .	. .	. . .
Tibia, left						
Maximum length	380	. . .	. . .	348	. . .	. . .
Middle diameter, anterior-posterior	31	. . .	. . .	26	. . .	. . .
Middle diameter, lateral	22	. . .	. . .	19	. . .	. . .
Nutrient foramen diameter, anterior-posterior	34	. . .	. . .	30	. . .	. . .
Nutrient foramen diameter, lateral	22	. . .	. . .	21	. . .	. . .
Minimum circumference	. . .	. . .	75	69	. . .	72
Middle index	71.0	. . .	. . .	73.1	. . .	. . .
Platycnemic index	64.7	. . .	. . .	70.0	. . .	. . .
Length-thickness index	. . .	. . .	. . .	19.8	. . .	. . .
Fibula, right						
Maximum length	351	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
Innominate, right						
Height	208	. . .	202	180	. . .	197
Breadth	157	. . .	144	114	. . .	156
Index	75.5	. . .	71.3	63.3	. . .	79.2
Innominate, left						
Height	209	. . .	. . .	179	. . .	. . .
Breadth	155	. . .	. . .	113	. . .	. . .
Index	74.2	. . .	. . .	63.1	. . .	. . .
Sacrum						
Height	105	. . .	97	114	111	. .
Breadth	110	. . .	119	101	123	. . .
Index	104.7	. . .	122.7	88.6	110.8	. . .
Pelvis						
Maximum breadth	268	. . .	206	224	. . .	. . .
Sagittal diameter	101	. . .	109	88	. . .	. . .
Transverse diameter	125	. . .	137	119	. . .	. . .
Index of pelvic inlet	80.8	. . .	79.6	74.0	. . .	. . .

[1] All measurements except cranial capacity in millimeters.

* Approximate measurements.

TABLE 2

Langtry Creek Skeletal Material: Observations

Individuals	2146	2150	2145	2147	2148	2149
Sex	*Male*	*Male*	*Female*	*Female*	*Female*	*Female*
Age	33	30	40	15	24	22
Cranial						
Cranial contour	Elipse	...	Elipse	Elipse	...	...
Pterion form	...	...	K	K	...	...
Glabella	3	...	3	3	...	...
Vault	Keeled	...	Keeled	Keeled	...	...
Mastoids, size	4	...	2	3	...	...
Wormian bones	4	...	...	3	...	...
Inion	...	...	...	4	...	...
Postcranial						
Humerus, right						
Shape of shaft	...	...	...	Prismatic	Prismatic	...
Peforation of the olecranion	...	...	...	Present	Present	...
Humerus, left						
Shape of shaft	...	Prismatic	Oval	Prismatic	...	...
Peforation of the olecranion	...	Absent	Present	Present	...	...
Femur, right						
Third, trochanter	Medium	...	...	Absent	Submed.	...
Crista	Submed.	...	...	Medium	Submed.	...
Fossa	Medium	...	...	Medium	Medium	...
Torsion	Medium	...	...	Medium	Submed.	Medium
Bowing	Medium	...	...	Submed.	Submed.	Medium
Shaft shape	Oval to quad.	...	...	Oval	Oval	Oval
Femur, left						
Third trochanter	...	Pron.	Medium	Absent	Submed.	...
Crista	...	Medium	Submed.	Medium	Submed.	...
Fossa	...	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	...
Torsion	...	Medium	Medium	Medium	Submed.	...
Bowing	...	Submed.	Medium	Submed.	Submed.	...
Shaft shape	Oval to quad.	Oval	Oval	Oval	Oval	...
Tibia, right						
Proximal retroversion	Pron.	Medium	Medium	Slight	Pron.	Pron.
Shape of shaft (Hrdlička)	Type III	Type III	Type III to V	Type VI	Type V	Type III
Squatting facet	Absent	Absent	...	Absent	Absent	Absent
Tibia, left						
Proximal retroversion	Pron.	...	...	Slight	...	...

TABLE 2—Continued

Langtry Creek Skeletal Material: Observations

Individuals	2146	2150	2145	2147	2148	2149
Sex	*Male*	*Male*	*Female*	*Female*	*Female*	*Female*
Age	33	30	40	15	24	22
Shape of shaft (Hrdlička)	Type III	. . .	. . .	Type VI	Type V	. . .
Squatting facet	Absent	. . .	. . .	Absent	. . .	. . .
Innominate, right						
Ischiatic notch	Narrow	. . .	Medium	Medium	. . .	Medium
Preauricular sulcus	Submed.	. . .	Medium	Medium	. . .	Deep
Ilium	Medium	. . .	Erect	Erect	. . .	Erect
Innominate, left						
Ischiatic notch	Narrow	. . .	. . .	Medium	. . .	. . .
Preauricular sulcus	Submed.	. . .	. . .	Medium	. . .	. . .
Ilium	Medium	. . .	. . .	Erect	. . .	. . .
Sacrum						
Segment	5	. . .	5	5	. . .	. . .
Sacral curve	Medium	. . .	Medium	Slight	. . .	. . .
Curve begins	2	. . .	4	3	. . .	. . .
Arthritic changes	Absent	. . .	Present	Absent	. . .	. . .

loss of all maxillary teeth. This rather early loss of teeth is quite common among the Val Verde County skeletal material (from Fate Bell Rockshelter, Muertos Cave, and the Orr Place) in the University's collection.

Pathology is demonstrated in the left tibia of Individual No. 2145, a 40 year old female, which showed evidence of a fracture incurred at a young age. By the time of death the fractured parts had completely fused together. This female had several small depressions about 5 mm. wide and 2 mm. deep on the skull. One was near bregma, and one on the right lamboid suture. These could be old wounds which had healed or, less likely, tumors.

The average age at the time of death of the Langtry Creek adult individuals was 29.9 years. This compares closely to an average age of 28.7 years for seven adult individuals from the Fate Bell Rockshelter (originally reported by Pearce and Jackson, 1933; skeletal material reanalyzed and aged by Benfer). However, other skeletal material from the area suggests a somewhat longer life span. Stewart (1935: 215) has reported on 22 individuals from four sites in Val Verde County: Goat Cave, Moorehead Cave, Satan Canyon, and "near Shumla." Only

TABLE 3

Comparison of Female Cranial Measurements from Langtry Creek Burial Cave, and Val Verde and Culberson Counties

	Sample Size	*Langtry Creek*	*Sample Size*	*Val Verde Co.*	*Sample Size*	*Culberson Co.*
Length, maximum	1	183	6	182.5	3	184.0
Breadth, maximum	1	134	6	123.0	3	130.7
Cranial index	1	73.2	6	67.4	3	71.0
Cranial module	1	147.3	6	144.3	3	146.5
Bizygomatic diameter	1	113	5	125.2	3	125.7
Orbital height, mean	1	33.5	6	31.4	3	32.5
Orbital breadth, mean	1	44	6	37.9	3	36.5
Orbital index	1	76.1	6	82.9	3	89.1
Nasal height	1	50	6	47.1	3	45.3
Nasal breadth	1	25	6	25.6	3	25.2
Nasal index	1	50	6	54.5	3	55.7

TABLE 4

Estimated Stature

2146, Male		*2147, Female*	
Femur, right	5′8″	Humerus, left	5′2″
Tibia, right	5′9″	Femur, right	5′3″
Tibia, left	5′9″	Tibia, left	5′6″
Fibula, right	5′6″	*2148, Female*	
2150, Male		Humerus, right	5′6″
Femur, left	5′8″	Radius, left	5′5″
Tibia, right	5′7″	Tibia, right	5′10″
2145, Female			
Humerus, left	5′4″		
Ulna, right	5′6″		
Femur, left	5′6″		

adults are presented in his report which he ages as follows: 9 senile, 12 adults, and 3 young adults. Five adults from the Coontain Spin Rockshelter (report in progress by John P. Nunley; skeletal material analyzed by Benfer) had an average age at time of death of 47 years.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Langtry Creek Burial Cave is located in southwestern Val Verde County, Texas. During prehistoric times, the upper part of this small, rather isolated shelter was used solely as a burial chamber. In the

course of excavation, skeletal remains of six individuals, two males and four females, were recovered, along with a few artifacts.

The bones of five of the six individuals appeared to have been somewhat scattered. Since one young female (No. 2147) was found loosely flexed, it is possible that the other burials were also originally buried in this position. No definite evidence for this can be presented, however, and the mode of interment is largely conjectual. Nonetheless, the remains do not appear to represent a primary group burial, because (1) the portion of the shelter containing the skeletal material seems too small to accommodate six primary burials; (2) the bones of the five individuals would not have been as disarticulated; and (3) the smooth stones overlying the burials would probably not have come to rest in a level layer over the bones following decomposition of the flesh, but rather might have become partially intermixed with the bones. If these assumptions are correct, then the burials (excepting the adolescent girl) must have been secondary, either reburials or buried after the flesh had been allowed to decay. The zoning in the shelter appeared uniform and suggests that the burials are of similar age and were made by the same peoples. Evidence suggests that later disturbance (by pothunters and/or pack rats?) was limited to the front and the southeast corner of the burial area.

Anthropometric data have been presented for the six individuals. The skulls are dolichocranic, a trait common to the area. Musculature was submedium for long bones. Stature for the males averaged 5′8″; for the females, 5′5″. The most complete skull recovered (a female, No. 2145) was noted as being similar in measurements to those from other sites in Val Verde County and one site in Culberson County. Other skeletal measurements, stature, and age at time of death, in general, compare favorably to the few reports thus far for Val Verde County.

Dating of this site is difficult and the suggested age is highly tentative. In sum, it has been noted that the *Edgewood* point type seems to have first appeared in the Late Archaic Stage (Johnson, 1962: 55), while rabbit sticks and plaited sandals possibly appeared earlier and may have continued in use until historic times. The custom of covering burials with baskets, mats, or grass occurs in most dry caves in western Texas. Burials covered with rocks, often manos and metates, have been found in western, northwestern, central, and northcentral Texas; and probably date from the early or middle part of the Archaic into Neo-American times. The occurrence of muliple burials is even more widespread and difficult to date.

In spite of some problems in interpreting the material from Langtry Creek Burial Cave, it is hoped that the information gained from the excavations will be useful in understanding the aboriginal cultures of Val Verde County. Perhaps future work in the Amistad Reservoir will help place the present findings into a more meaningful context.

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