

Anderson's Mill (41 TV 130): A Historic Site in Travis County, Texas

E. PAUL DURRENBERGER

ABSTRACT

Working intermittently on week ends from the fall of 1963 to the fall of 1964, members of The University of Texas Archeological Society carried out small scale excavations at Anderson's Mill, a historic mill and house site apparently built in the early 1860's. The history of the mill and the structural remains are briefly noted; the main part of the paper is devoted to a description of the artifacts recovered from the surface and the excavations.

INTRODUCTION

Anderson's Mill is the site of a mill and house dating from the early 1860's to possibly as late as the 1920's. In this paper a description of the structural features and artifacts recovered from the site are presented. The main emphasis, however, is placed on the artifacts, as little remained of the structures. Moreover, the artifact analysis provides a general picture of what might be found at other historic sites of the same period. While structures may vary widely in function (for instance, forts, houses, trading posts, missions, mills) many of the same kinds of specimens (for example, dishes, nails, bottles, etc.) can be recovered from them.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Having traveled through Virginia from Pennsylvania, Thomas Anderson arrived in Texas in 1859 (Upton, 1941: 3), bringing with him some furnishings such as china, silver, and linens (Anderson, 1959: 2). Shortly after reaching Texas, Anderson built a log dwelling to house his family while he and others constructed a mill. When the mill was finished—apparently in 1862 or 1863—he built a more comfortable house which had a basement where many jams, jellies, pickles, and preserves were stored. The house had a wide central hall with a fireplace on either side. Around the house area Anderson built a rock wall with front, back, and side gates. Somewhat later he added an irrigation system which consisted in part of a stone tank on high

which radiate from a central point. The lines from each surface converge at the edge and produce a sawtooth-like rim.

Vessel form: This specimen is solid and was elliptical in cross section. It was an estimated 2.2 cm. in diameter and is 1.15 cm. in maximum thickness. It is probably part of a lid knob.

Concentric Circles (Fig. 18, H)

Number of specimens: 1

Color: Amethystine

Design: A series of horizontal, concentric circles

Vessel form: This piece is a complete knob, 2.2 cm. high and 2.4 cm. in maximum diameter.

Multi-Pointed Star (Fig. 18, I)

Number of specimens: 1

Color: Amethystine

Design: Incomplete, but appears to have a multi-pointed star.

Vessel form: Apparently a shallow, wide-mouth vessel of thick (.75 cm.) glass.

In addition to the above, there are 16 pieces of pressed glass which are so small that their design elements cannot be accurately ascertained.

Miscellaneous Glass Objects

Included in this category are:

1) One hundred and twelve fragments of window glass (Fig. 19, A, B). These range from .15 to .3 cm. in thickness, and are coated with flecks of gold and blue, as a result of corrosion.

2) A flat fragment of glass with a smooth, wavy edge (Fig. 19, C). It is possible that this piece is from a glass table top cover.

3) Nine pieces of very thin (.05 to .1 cm.) glass, probably from lamp chimneys (Fig. 19, D, E).

4) Three fragments of white, opaque glass possibly from a cosmetic (cold cream?) container (Fig. 19, F).

✓ 5) Two beads, one of which is a molded red bead with a geometric design. The other is a plain, spheroid-shaped blue bead. The red one is 1.5 cm. long and .7 cm. in diameter; the blue one is .55 cm. in diameter.

6) A basal fragment (Fig. 19, G) of a small salt bowl. The diameter of the base is 2.65 cm. and the maximum thickness is .45 cm.

7) Three buttons, each with four holes. One (Fig. 19, I) is 2.3 cm. in diameter and two (Fig. 19, H) are 1.1 cm. in diameter.

8) Fragments of what appear to be a faceted bottle (Fig. 19, J), possibly a perfume container.