

WANT TO GET MORE INVOLVED?

If you are interested in learning more about Texas archeology, consider joining an archeological society.

Texas Archeological Society (TAS). This nonprofit society is a preservation partner of the THC. Most TAS members start out with no formal training in or understanding of Texas archeology—just curiosity and an interest in the past. Society members receive training in field and laboratory techniques from professional archeologists at field schools. TAS has held field schools annually since the 1960s. For more information on becoming a member, visit the website at www.txarch.org or call 210.458.4393.

Local archeological societies. While not directly affiliated with TAS, these societies often support the same goals of archeological preservation and study. Local societies offer their members convenient learning opportunities closer to home through monthly meetings and guided outings, information on topics of local concern, and many chances to meet and learn from professional and experienced avocational archeologists.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you need archeological assistance, contact:

**Texas Historical Commission
Archeology Division**

P.O. Box 12276, Austin TX 78711-2276

Phone: 512.463.6096

Email: archeology@thc.texas.gov or marine.archeology@thc.texas.gov

Website: www.thc.texas.gov



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
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DOCUMENTING ARCHEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS



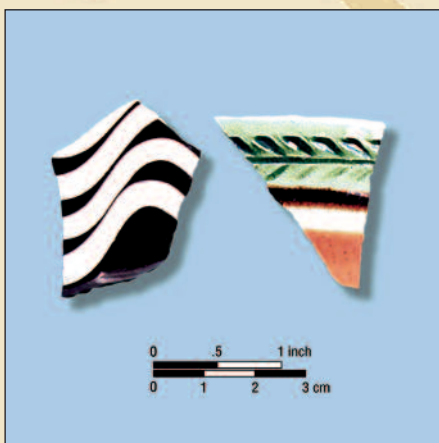
Almost everyone knows a neighbor or friend who has a collection of artifacts. You may have even picked up an arrowhead or pottery sherd yourself. Archeologists discourage private collecting because it destroys information about a site that could later prove useful. But already existing private collections can reveal information about the history of an area—if the collector can provide details about the location and circumstances of discovery. A thorough documentation process includes photographing, drawing, measuring, and note keeping.



If you know someone with an artifact collection and are willing to document it, follow the steps outlined inside and submit your documentation to the Texas Historical Commission (THC) regional archeologist for your region, as shown on the back of this brochure. If you do not think you can document the collection yourself, a member of the Texas Archeological

Stewardship Network may be able to help. Founded in 1984, this network is made up of a group of highly trained and motivated avocational archeologists—“stewards”—who work with the THC on a volunteer basis. Some stewards are experts in documenting private collections. Get in touch with your regional archeologist to find the steward nearest you.

How to Document a Collection



■ Now describe the collection in your notes. If you can, identify and note the raw material from which each artifact was manufactured (Edwards chert or quartzite, for example). Take basic measurements, such as maximum length, width, and thickness, using a metric scale or pair of metric calipers. If you are recording artifacts from a historical site, measure them in feet and inches.

■ Photography is perhaps the most important aspect of collection documentation. Groups of artifacts found together should be photographed together, especially items found in a cache or burial. It is not necessary to photograph every item, but try to photograph all artifacts from like time periods or for like functions (for example, all stone tools, all decorated ceramics). It is usually best

to photograph only six to eight artifacts per frame and include a scale. (See photo at far left.) This ensures that the photographs will provide enough detail to be useful.

■ Black-and-white film is best because of its archival stability, but it is becoming difficult to locate and process. Color digital images are useful if color is a key feature of a particular artifact. Images generated by digital cameras need to be taken in high-resolution mode (at least 1200–1600 pixels).

■ If a collection is under glass, photograph it, but also sketch it. (The reflection off the glass in a photograph can obscure part of the collection.) Your sketch may prove invaluable when trying to determine details in the photo.

■ Ask the owner of the collection to sort the artifacts according to their original sites. Many collectors can remember exactly where they found each piece, even items recovered years ago. If the collector cannot recall where the artifacts were found or simply doesn't want to reveal the information, you may have better results researching a different collection.

■ Once the artifacts have been sorted by site, sort them by category (projectile points, scrapers, knives, ceramics, etc.). Then sort them by type, using a guide such as *Stone Artifacts of Texas Indians* by Ellen Sue Turner, Thomas R. Hester, and Richard L. McReynolds; published by Rowman and Littlefield, Inc.

