Figure 1.1. Map showing the locations of Mission San Sabá, Presidio San Sabá, and the Menard Irrigation Company canal in the San Saba River valley. Base map is a portion of the 7.5-minute USGS Menard and Chapman Draw quadrangles.
Sec. 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. The Federal Highway Administration delegated most of their responsibility for Section 106 compliance to TxDOT.

TxDOT’s Cultural Resources Management (CRM) Section conducts these reviews on behalf of 25 TxDOT Districts around the state. The CRM section is comprised of the Archeological Studies and Historical Studies branches.

TxDOT works under a programmatic agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Federal Highway Administration and the Texas State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the implementation of transportation undertakings. This agreement allows TxDOT to efficiently meet the Sec. 106 requirements for many simple projects that have a low risk for impacts to cultural resources.
Visit TxDOT’s Sessions at the 89th Annual Meeting of the TAS

FRIDAY
Prehistoric Flintknapping Tools of Texas: Examining Indirect Percussion Technique through Experimental Archeology
Christopher Ringstaff
3 p.m., Ballroom A

SATURDAY
Landform Considerations for Caddo Villages in Northeast Texas
Waldo Troell
1:30 – 1:50 p.m., Renaissance

Archeobotany and Tribal Plant Use, Featuring Representatives from Caddo Nation and Mescalero Apache Tribe
Kevin Hanselka, Ph.D.
3:00 – 4:50 p.m., Renaissance

Searching for Ancient Long-Distance Trade Trails in Southeast Texas
Jason Barrett, Ph.D.
3:30 p.m., Ballroom B

POSTER SESSION
Saturday 10 a.m. – Noon
Evaluation of a Possible Activity Area at 41MS99
Scott Pletka, Ph.D.

Dating Gary: Results from 41TR203 in the Trinity River Basin, North Central Texas
Eric Oksanen
For 47 years, TxDOT has uncovered some of the most significant archeological sites as it plans for the construction of roads and bridges around the state. Guided by the National Historic Preservation Act, TxDOT looks at what might be impacted by projects. We work with partners in preservation and with local communities to balance the need for progress with the goal of preserving archeological sites.

The department continues do more permitted archeology than any other entity in Texas. In 2018, TxDOT will excavate three different sites in order to preserve information that would otherwise be lost due to road construction.

TxDOT unearthed 41,956 cubic feet at 21 archeological sites over the past 15 years.

Field Notes from 2018
Background studies: 243
Surveys: 62
Acres surveyed: 4899
Sites Identified: 52

Excavation Projects in 2018
Mason County
Ellis County
Nueces County
Mission San Saba

Taking to the Field

In 2007, TxDOT sent out a team of archeologists to survey a portion of Farm-to-Market road 2092. TxDOT planned to expand the roadway, which passed alongside the location where the ruins of Mission Santa Cruz de San Saba had been discovered. Archaeologists took this opportunity to further investigate the site, ensuring that important information wasn’t lost when the road was widened.

San Saba at a Glance

Mission San Saba was built in the frontier of Central Texas as a plan by the Spanish empire to convert the Lipan Apache to Catholicism, thereby reducing their raids on San Antonio. By doing so, the Spanish would gain a labor force in the Americas, necessary for maintaining the strength of the Spanish Empire in the American colonies. San Saba was Spain’s first privately funded mission. Rather than the crown or church, a wealthy miner, Don Pedro Terreros, paid for its construction.

The San Saba Presidio was built to lend aid to the mission, to further protect San Antonio against Apache raiding, and to serve as an outpost for mineral exploration. However, the Presidio was located 4 miles away from the mission, making it difficult for soldiers, in a time of emergency, to reach the mission quickly.

Mission San Saba, built in 1757, provides a rare glimpse into Texas history. It was destroyed less than a year after its creation, yet its destruction was one of the defining moments in Texas’ rich history. The mission had nearly been lost to history as it was built over, forgotten, or confused with the famous San Saba Presidio just four miles away. Once only a symbol of a bygone Empire, today the mission’s ruins are a tale of New World conflict between European powers and indigenous nations, galvanized to defend their homeland.
For many long years, the Spanish had developed a shaky relationship with the Lipan Apache. The Spanish found that when they made a treaty with the Apache, it only applied to the group making the treaty and not to the Apache Nation as a whole. This was common practice among native groups across North America, and a common problem that all European powers faced. For the Spanish, it complicated telling allies apart from enemies.

At the time San Saba was built, there was constant tension throughout the region between Comanche and Apache groups. When the mission’s priests allowed a few Apache to seek shelter within its walls, the Comanche viewed the Spanish as aiding their Apache enemies. Armed with French weapons and military uniforms, the Comanche planned and executed a large-scale attack on the Spanish Mission, shocking the entire Spanish Colonial Empire.

Mission San Saba burned to the ground, and a quarter of its population perished. The fall of Mission San Saba was a result of Spain’s failure to understand and respect indigenous culture and the complex political relationships that existed among the native peoples of Texas. This destruction effectively halted the Spanish push to settle in the northern frontier.

The Destruction of Mission San Saba

This 1760s painting depicts what happened on that frightful day when Mission San Saba fell. The painting was likely commissioned by Don Pedro Terreros to use as both a commemorative and propaganda tool.

Destruction shows Comanche and other groups attacking the mission with modern weapons. Similarly, the center of this image highlights the attackers looting the church and stealing religious objects.

In the lower right corner, the Comanche chief is portrayed wearing a red overcoat, symbolizing the French influence and involvement in this attack.

In analyzing the painting, archaeologists uncovered much about the Spanish view of “New Spain” at the time. They unraveled political propaganda and religious messages. The symbolically rich painting revealed some of the lost details of history through its representation of the battle in a way that few mediums can match.
The First Shovelful – Searching for San Saba

Just as the mission location was a mystery for almost 100 years, myths about the site remain even after its rediscovery. Every clue opened a new window to the forgotten past, until archaeologists Kay Hindes and Grant Hall from Texas Tech University arrived on Otis Lyckman’s farm in 1993. Within minutes they had found some fragments of bone and Spanish pottery.

Excitement coursed in their blood. They had searched for so long. The archeologists had dived through ancient archive after archive, talked to numerous historians, and consulted every article. Still, the lost Mission San Saba continued to elude them. But their fortunes changed when they happened across an obscure pamphlet published in 1905. The pamphlet led them to the property of Otis Lyckman, who had just recently plowed his alfalfa fields. Glistening in the freshly churned dirt beneath the afternoon sun was the evidence…they had found it! Mission San Saba.

Between 1993 and 1994, with a summer excavation in 1997, the archaeologists from Texas Tech University did everything they could to revive the forgotten history of Mission San Saba. Unfortunately, the project was placed on a decade-long hiatus, preventing them from completing their work on the lost mission.

Digging Deeper

Collaborative efforts between TxDOT, Prewitt and Associates, Inc., Texas Tech University, with the support of the adjacent landowners, examined the southern portion of the mission site. Multidisciplinary scholars worked together to re-discover the lost mission from the first excavation in 1993.

Texas’ Most Unique Mission

As archeologists and historians continued to uncover the story of San Saba, it became clear that this mission was unique in three ways.

1. The mission was privately funded. In addition, it was also geographically and politically isolated.

2. San Saba is the only Spanish mission in Texas’ history to be completely destroyed.

3. Scholars discovered two uncommon sources of information while researching the mission. The first was the painting, Destruction of San Saba, and the second a supply list that was carried from Mexico to the mission.
Discoveries

A series of shovel tests and hand excavations yielded roughly 2,442 artifacts. Though many of those artifacts were not related to San Saba, more than 100 Spanish Colonial artifacts pointed directly to the history of Mission San Saba. Among the artifacts uncovered, some included olive jar shards, blue silver dish remnants, and a few butchered animal bones.

A nearly complete Perdiz arrow point was found near a cluster of animal bones, including rabbit-sized mammals and fish. The point was expertly crafted from gray/pink chert with fine pressure flaking along the edges.

As it was found amongst a cluster of animal bones, the weapon may have been used to hunt small game animals for food. However, archeologists also believe it’s likely the arrow point was used by the Apache or another northern tribe during the mission attack.
Inventory of Supplies Purchased in Mexico for the Mission Santa Cruz de San Saba

This document, created in 1756 – 1757, includes a complete list of supplies and services purchased and moved to Texas for the mission. Though originally in Spanish, the inventory was not translated into English until 1995.

Father Francisco de la Santisima Trinidad was in charge of creating the 16-page inventory that would supply the founding of up to three missions. The list even includes the finances necessary for building and sustaining a mission. Some items on the inventory include:

- 1,300 cattle
- 180 sheep
- 69 dozen large knives
- 1,080 rosary beads
- 300 women’s blouses
- Flour
- Corn
- Beans

San Saba’s Spatial Orientation

Mark Wolf, a historian and architectural expert, studied the impressions of stick and branch latticework (wattle) left on fragments of burned clay (daub) that were discovered during the archeological dig. The pattern of where wattle and daub construction materials were found on site provides an important clue to the specific layout of the mission.

By conducting a spatial analysis of the post holes, fired daub, and other artifacts found in the area, TxDOT was able to understand the construction and layout of the mission along the southern wall of the site. Archeologists also used maps created by Texas Tech University to gain a better understanding of the mission’s layout.

Jacal-like structures were once concentrated along the southern wall of San Saba. These were simple structures made with mud and vertical wood posts. They were usually a single-room structure, as pictured right.
Chapter 7: Analysis of Fired Daub

In general, the PAI daub collection appears to have been exposed to more intensive firing compared to the TTU daub excavated immediately to the north. There are fewer soft, rounded, sooty organic pieces in the PAI collection, suggesting more intense or prolonged burning. This greater degree of heating could indicate that this is where the Norteños piled brush near the stockade and structures to start the fires (Nathan and Simpson 2000:88). It also is possible that the PAI daub...
Soil Samples

Archeologists discovered a thin, intermittent ash layer that represents evidence of the 1758 burning of Mission San Saba. Clearly, soils had mixed over time due to insect burrowing and tree root growth, but the ash points directly to the conflict that destroyed the mission.

Near the layer of ash, archeologists found two wrought-iron nails, one wrought-iron spike, three olive jar sherds, and a Native-made ceramic sherd, as pictured below.
are similar to the long spikes but smaller. They range in length from 3.6 to 5.1 cm, in shank width from 0.4 to 0.6 cm, and in head width from 1.0 to 1.8 cm.

**NAILS**

Four of the six nails are complete, ranging in length from 36.3 to 48.8 mm. Five have square shanks, and one has a rectangular shank. Three or four heads are rectangular with rounded corners and appear to have peaked at the center of the head, and one head has been misshapen beyond recognition. The heads of five of the specimens are centered on the shank, while one specimen is off center (i.e., a “seven” nail).

**TTU's excavations recovered 47 nails, 29 from the 1993–1994 excavations and 18 from the 1997 excavations (Hall and Gilmore 1995:33–40; McWilliams 2001:75).** They are classified as medium-sized nails (29 from the 1994–1995 excavations and 9 from 1997) that range in length from 2.7 to 6.0 cm and in shank thickness...
Post Holes

This image represents evidence of the remains of one of many wall posts discovered during the excavation. It is likely that the upper portion of the post burned, leaving a dusting of charcoal just below the surface. The remaining post below the surface decomposed, leaving a dark stain on the ground and post mold.
Botanical and Faunal Remains

Over 774 specimens of recovered vertebrate were analyzed by TxDOT and PAI during the excavation process. Samples were comparatively examined at the Zooarcheological Research Collection at the University of North Texas.

Many animal bones recovered from Spanish Colonial deposits exhibited butchering marks left by metal handsaws, knives, and cleavers. The bones of cattle, a European animal species introduced to the area by the Spanish, were among the butchered remains. Also present were many recent animal remains, likely from road kill. Archeologists noted, however, that the recent bones were easy to distinguish from the older bones associated with the mission.

Large samples of wood were found near the excavated area at San Saba. Acacia and mesquite, pecan, hickory, and oak were likely native to the area and used for construction. The pine specimens were probably imported from Mexico. Archeologists also found evidence of barley seeds, beans, and hazelnut, though only corn and beans were listed on the inventory of supplies.

Interestingly, Texas Tech University identified a plant material that appeared to be ojos de benado, or deer eyes. Used as ornamental charms, these “deer eyes” were large brown and black seeds that mimicked actual deer eyes.
San Saba’s Lasting Legacy

Thanks to the archeological work of PAI, TxDOT, Texas Tech University, and other consulting parties, the story of the Mission Santa Cruz de San Saba continues to unfold. Many mysteries surrounding the mission still remain. Where was the mission cemetery located? Will evidence of the northern and eastern walls of the stockade be found?

Today, visitors can get a sense of what the area looked like through the use of native plants and interpretive materials. The Presidio San Saba was reconstructed by the Works Progress Administration in 1936, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The site of Mission San Saba is identified by the Texas Centennial Marker along the highway.