

Golondrina Points From Duval County, Texas

David S. Calame

ABSTRACT

This paper documents and describes four Golondrina points and one medial Paleoindian point fragment from a site in northeast Duval County. The discoveries were made by an oil field worker while surface collecting during the extended drought of the 1950s.

THE SITE

The find site is described as a location northeast of Freer, Texas, in Duval County, not far off of Hwy 59 to the northwest, on a high spot in that area. The high spot is described as a hill with two “knobs” or high points, which lies due north of an oil field pipeline pumping station. All specimens reportedly were found on the westernmost high point of this hill within a fairly tight area described as “the top of the western knob”. There are no sites recorded within the USGS Freer NW quad within which these artifacts were found.

THE ARTIFACTS

Golondrina points are described by Turner and Hester (1993:126) as a lanceolate point with a deep basal concavity (more than 4 mm) and basal corners, or “ears” that are usually flared. Both the basal edge and concavity are heavily ground. Hester and Word (2004) have recently reviewed the age for this point type, suggesting that it dates to around 10,000 years ago, based on radiocarbon assays from Baker Cave (41VV213) and Devils Mouth (41VV188). The type is widely distributed across central and southern Texas and the Lower Pecos region. All below described specimen’s fluoresced standard responses that would be expected for Edwards cherts.

Specimen A

(Figure 2,a) This is a Golondrina point basal fragment made of fine-grained, light tan chert of good quality. This point appears to have been broken in the haft by impact, as it exhibits classic impact fracture characteristics laterally across the face and along one lateral edge. Edge grinding extends from the base along the lateral edges up to the impact fracture, which suggests the point was broken in the haft. Edge grinding is heavy on both lateral edges as

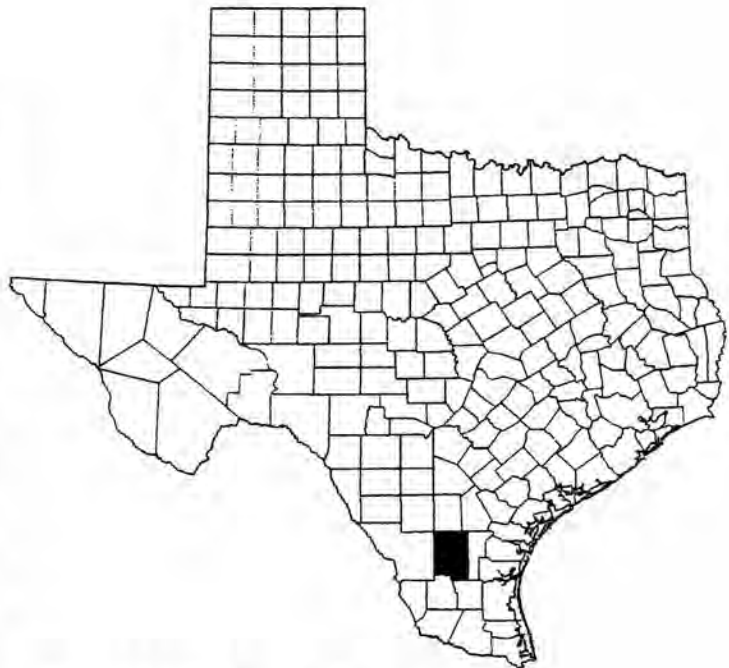


Figure 1. Location of Duval County.

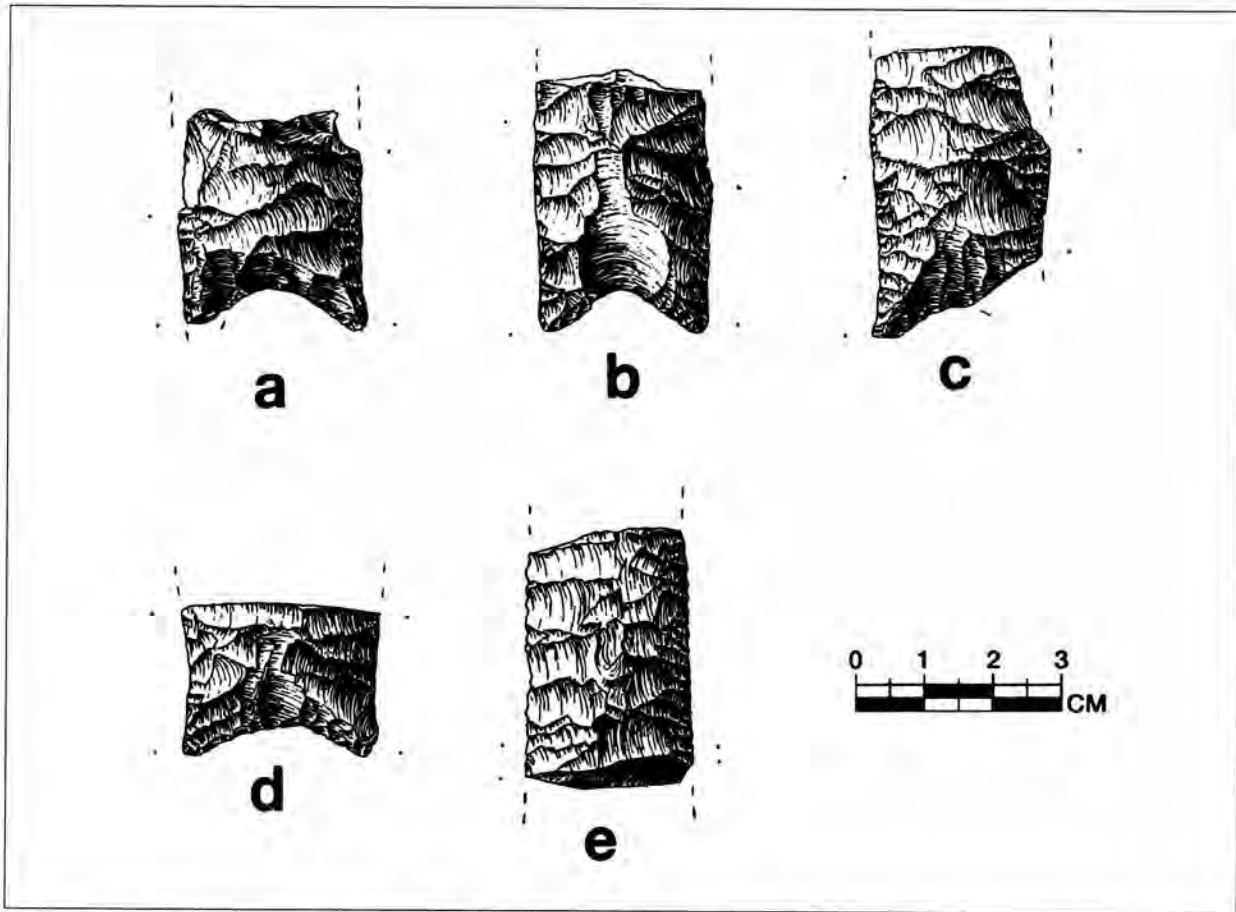


Figure 2. Golondrina Points from Duval County, Texas. a-d, basal fragments (Specimens A-D); e, medial section of a Paleoindian point (Specimen E).

well as in the basal concavity. Since the point was broken in the haft, there is no evidence of resharpening. Flaking on this point appears to be very controlled, parallel, collateral pressure flaking, similar to that reproduced by Swoose Alexander as documented by Calame et al. (2003). The basal "ears" do start to flare out slightly on this specimen just above the basal concavity. One "ear" is broken off, giving that lateral edge the appearance of being straight. This specimen is lightly covered by a ghost white patina. The basal concavity was thinned bifacially with a series of short pressure flakes no longer than 7 mm. Edge grinding extends up from the base 25 mm on the longest lateral edge. Maximum width of this specimen is 25 mm. Basal concavity depth is 5 mm. Maximum thickness of this artifact is 6 mm. Point is bi-convex in cross section.

Specimen B

(Figure 2,b). Specimen B is a Golondrina point basal fragment made of fine-grained, light tan chert of good quality, very similar to Specimen A. This specimen was broken by an impact fracture just slightly above the haft, and exhibits classic characteristics of impact fractures in removing a portion of one lateral edge. Edge grinding is heavy and extends up the left lateral edge 30 mm as seen in Figure 2,b. The base was thinned by one large flute like pressure flake from the top of the basal concavity measuring 20 mm. The obverse base was thinned by a series of pressure flakes no longer than 9 mm. Flaking on both faces appears to be controlled pressure, with generally parallel collateral flaking. No evidence of resharpening remains on this basal point fragment.

Maximum width of this specimen is 25 mm and maximum thickness is 7 mm. Depth of the basal concavity is 7 mm and grinding in the basal concavity can best be described as "light". The base begins to flare outward slightly, right at the top of the basal concavity. The specimen is bi-convex in cross section.

Specimen C

(Figure 2,c). The artifact is a Golondrina point missing the distal end and one basal corner. This specimen is made of fine-grained, light tan chert of good quality very similar to the previously described specimens. The type of fracture that broke this point is not obvious because of later rechipping of one lateral edge. This rechipping is recent enough to not have any patina on it and when subjected to the UV light, the rechipped area fluoresces much brighter than the remaining surface of the point. It appears the missing basal corner is a snap fracture created from pressure applied to one face of this specimen. Edge grinding is heavy and extends 23 mm up from the base of the point. Maximum width of this specimen is 25 mm, although it may have been a bit wider above the rechipped area. Maximum thickness is 7 mm. The basal concavity is 5 mm deep and exhibits heavy grinding. The specimen is bi-convex in cross section. The pronounced flaring on the remaining basal "ear" occurs just slightly above the basal concavity.

Specimen D

(Specimen 2,d). Another Golondrina basal fragment, Specimen D is also made of fine-grained, light tan chert of good quality. The fracture of this specimen appears to be a bending fracture caused by pressure applied to the obverse face of the artifact. The break occurred in the hafted area as heavy grinding of the lateral edges continues from the base along the lateral edges to the fracture. Grinding extends 21 mm maximum from the base, however, it appears that grinding continued on farther prior to the artifact's breakage. Maximum width of this specimen is 27 mm and maximum thickness is 5 mm. The basal concavity, which exhibits heavy grinding,

is 3 mm deep. The basal "ears" flare outward beginning at 11 mm above the base. The base was thinned by a series of bifacial pressure flakes, the longest of which measures 13 mm. Flaking appears to be very organized, collateral pressure flaking, with edge retouch and heavy grinding. The specimen is bi-convex in cross section.

Specimen E

(Figure 2,e). This specimen is a medial fragment of a Paleoindian lanceolate dart point. There is no edge grinding on the specimen's lateral edges. Indeed, both lateral edges are alternately beveled from re-sharpening. The material again is a fine-grained light tan chert of good quality. Flaking is highly controlled collateral pressure flaking. Both end fractures occurred in antiquity, and exhibit the same light covering of patina found over the entire piece. One end fracture maybe the result of re-sharpening effort got awry. The obverse face has some small specks of what this author considers iron staining, probably inflicted by contact with iron implements, such as plowing equipment. Maximum width of this specimen is 23 mm, while the maximum thickness is 6 mm.

DISCUSSION

Although Golondrina points are widely found across south Texas, they are most often found as isolated artifacts, or as single specimens from an eroded site surface. Thus, it is significant that all five of these reported artifacts were found on the surface in a relatively small area atop a small knoll in northern Duval County. Since four of the specimens include bases, it maybe that these artifacts were removed from the haft during retooling efforts. This suggests that the knoll top was being used as a campsite. The four specimens were broken in or just above the hafting area and three exhibit impact fractures, traits that reflect hunting episodes in the vicinity of the campsite. Although Golondrina point distribution was assumed to include Duval County, this paper verifies the existence of this point type in that county of southern Texas.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge the late Elmer Maxwell, finder of the reported artifacts, who

transferred ownership of these artifacts to the author so that they could be thoroughly studied. And of course, special thanks to my wife, Debbie, who always takes up my slack around the house while I am writing.

REFERENCES CITED

Calame, D. L., Sr., C. K. Smyers and R. P. Stein, Jr.
2003 John E. "Swoose" Alexander's Parallel Oblique Flaking Technique. *La Tierra* 30 (3&4):61-64.

Hester, T. R. and J. H. Word
2004 Golondrina Points at Baker Cave—Data from the James H. Word Excavations of the 1960s. *La Tierra* 31(2):1-4.

Turner, E. S. and T. R. Hester
1993 *Field Guide to Stone Artifacts of the Texas Indians*. 2nd edition. Gulf Publishing, Houston, Texas.