

Archeological and Historical Background Study of
Castner Range,
Fort Bliss Military Installation, El Paso County, Texas

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Abstract

The area currently known as Castner Range (located on the eastern alluvial fans of the Franklin Mountains) has been utilized since the Early Archaic period (6,000 B.C.). Archeological evidence in the form of hearths, structure remains (pithouses), pictographs and petroglyphs (rock art), various lithic (stone) tools, and pottery pieces confirm the human occupation of this area. The area provided seasonal shelter, food, wood for heating/cooking, several water sources, and an endless supply of lithic material for making tools (i.e., knives, scrapers, choppers, manos and metates, along with pestles and mortars [both hand-sized and bedrock mortars]). Tools were used for hunting (arrows and arrow heads) and processing food. Pottery was introduced via trade from other communities (Mimbres, Casas Grandes, etc.). In addition, the natural landscape of the Franklin Mountains provided a safe haven against enemies.

During the Historic period, the area was pretty much left to the Comanche, Apache, and bandits or cattle rustlers who used it for hiding out. By the 1900s, a tin mine was opened in hopes of cashing-in on the natural resource. Unfortunately, the venture proved unsuccessful and would eventually close.

By the mid-1920s, Fort Bliss acquired acreage and created Castner Target Range. Because of the landscape, the range would be extensively utilized for training of antitank weaponry during World War II, Korean War, and the Vietnam War (or conflict).

By 1966, live-firing ceased and only limited use of the area was allowed. The City of El Paso was expanding and Woodrow Bean Transmountain Dr (Loop 375) would be constructed. At that point, all military activity stopped. Periodic surface sweeps of Castner Range were conducted in the 1970s, 1980s, and again during the 1990s.

Various Native American groups continue to view the Franklin Mountains as a sacred area because of the vegetation found that is still utilized in ceremonies. Specifically, the Mescalero Apache continue to visit the area to collect agave for puberty ceremonies.

At least 41 archeological sites have been identified and recorded on Castner Range some as recent as 2011. Archeological sites located at the east-facing base of the Franklin Mountains within Castner Range have either washed away (rather than naturally covered by silt) due to man-made impacts or have been destroyed by those same impacts. Fusselman Canyon Rock Art District, a federally protected site, rock shelters, and other rock art within Castner Range, close to roadways or trails, are in danger of being destroyed by man-made impacts or other types of vandalism.

Ironically, and although extremely dangerous, unexploded ordnance (UXO) present on Castner Range has inadvertently provided a welcomed result: it has kept the overall Castner Range from extensive vandalism, off-road recreational vehicle activities, and commercial, industrial, and/or residential development. Castner Range, Fort Bliss is owned by the Department of Defense and due to the presence of UXOs, people are not allowed on the land. As Ms. Judy Ackerman once said to Bryan Gatchell of the *Fort Bliss Bugle*, "This land is in gorgeous condition today thanks to the stewardship of Fort Bliss and the unexploded ordnance" (fortblissbugle.com/visitors-enjoy-celebration-of-poppies-now-poppies-free/). Currently, Castner Range is one of the last "open spaces" in El Paso.

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Introduction

Archeological evidence has indicated that humans have occupied the El Paso region for more than 10,000 years. The overall Fort Bliss Military Installation contains more than 30,000 archeological properties and continues to identify more. The Rio Grande Valley contains further evidence of prehistoric human occupation by the small camp sites, villages, and pueblos located along the river. Historically, humans continued to come into the area in search of food, shelter, exploration, and riches. Archeological evidence and historic documentation indicates that the area now known as Castner Range was also used by prehistoric and historic peoples.

Between 1926 and 1966, training in the use of live fire of small arms, assault weapons, and field and air defense artillery was conducted at Castner Range (Parsons Engineering Science, Inc. 1998). Castner Range encompasses 7,081 acres of the more than 2.1 million acres that makes up the Fort Bliss Military Installation. The Fort Bliss Military Installation is the second largest United States Army post located in Texas and New Mexico, within the Hueco Bolson of the Chihuahuan Desert. The Hueco Bolson is a geological feature surrounded by various mountain ranges, specifically the Franklin and Organ Mountains to the west, the Hueco Mountains to the east, and the Sacramento Mountains to the north (Abbott et al. 1996).

Prior to Castner Range being utilized as an artillery range, prehistoric peoples occupied, travelled through, and utilized the area. Castner Range is located on the eastern alluvial fans of the Franklin Mountains (Figure 1).

The Franklin Mountains are the bedrock sources for the alluvial fan deposits. These rock deposits include basalt, chalcedony, chert, dolomite, granite, limestone, rhyolite, sandstone, shale, and quartzite (Barnes 1983; Denison and Hetherington 1969; Kottlowksi 1975; Nelson 1940; Nelson and Haigh 1958; Seager et al. 1987; Thomann and Hoffer 1985; Thomann and Hoffer 1989).

Church et al. (1996) stated that the chert, chalcedony, and some of the rhyolite and basalt were more favorable for processing chipped stone tools (arrow heads, scrapers, stone knives, etc.). The rock material was more conducive for making stone tools that were also durable. The raw material for ground stone tools consisted of sandstone, dolomite, limestone, rhyolite, and quartzite with Franklin rhyolite the main source for hammerstones (Church et al. 1996).

The soils within Castner Range are associated with Delnorte-Canutio deposits. These sediments are very gravelly sandy loams with underlying alluvial deposits of very gravelly sandy loam (Jaco 1971). Loams consist of a mixture of fine-grained sand and clay materials and can have nutrients favorable for farming. Modern agricultural activities are conducted in other parts of the El Paso region where these soils are also present. On Castner Range, these soils further sustain vegetation that has provided food and shelter for a variety of wildlife: Mourning dove, blue quail, eagle, raven, crow, and more than 100 other bird species, as well as coyote, bobcat, jackrabbit, cottontail rabbit, mountain lion, mule deer, grey and kit foxes, and badgers (Jaco 1971: 8). The frequency of some mammals (i.e., mountain lion, bobcat, foxes) has decreased due to human and environmental impacts such as development and/or drought, respectively. A variety of grasses, soap tree yucca, honey mesquite, mesquite, Mormon tea, tepary bean, and intrusive plants such as creosote bush, lechugilla, ocotillo, prickly pear cactus, cane cholla, pencil cholla/Christmas cactus, sand sagebrush, and annual grasses and forbs further characterize the vegetation of Castner Range (Jaco 1971: 38; Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.3). The latter would be used as food, fuel (fire wood), medicine, tools, and weapons by prehistoric humans occupying the area (Miller et al. 2009).



Figure 1. Aerial view of Castner Range, map courtesy of the Frontera Land Alliance.

Prehistory of the Region and Castner Range

The following prehistoric discussions have appeared in one form or another in numerous technical reports prepared for the Fort Bliss Military Installation by TRC Environmental, Inc. from 1999 to about 2014. The prehistory found within the Hueco Bolson and Tularosa Basin is generally used to describe the region. The following is the most commonly used information/chronology for the region, with specific descriptions associated with Castner Range.

In general, the preceramic prehistory of the region is subdivided into two cultural traditions: the Paleoindian (9500 to 5500 B.C.) and the Archaic (5500 B.C. to A.D. 250). These are further subdivided into complexes or phases based on patterns in material culture. The following discussion presents these temporal subdivisions (Table 1).

Table 1. Prehistoric Culture History Periods

Period	Complex/Phase	Approximate Dates
Paleoindian		9500-6000 B.C.
	Clovis	9500-9000 B.C.
	Folsom	9000-8000 B.C.
	Plano/Cody	8500-6000 B.C.
Archaic		6000 B.C.-A.D. 250
Early	Gardner Spring	6000-4300 B.C.
Middle	Keystone	4300-2600 B.C.
	Fresnal	2600-900B B.C.
Terminal Late	Hueco	900 B.C.-A.D. 250
Formative		A.D. 250-1500
Pithouse	Mesilla	A.D. 250-1100
Transitional	Doña Ana	A.D. 1100-1200/1250
Pueblo	El Paso	A.D. 1250-1550

Paleoindian Period (9500-6000 B.C.)

The earliest prehistoric period identified for the El Paso region is the Paleoindian. The Paleoindian has a chronological range of 9500 B.C. to 5500 B.C. The local climate was cooler and wetter than today, with more lush vegetation and a few now-evaporated lakes on the basin floors (Van Devender 1990). Human occupation consisted of hunter-gatherers following now-extinct Pleistocene megafauna. The El Paso Museum of Archeology currently exhibits a fossilized molar, tusk, and portions of the lower mandible of a mammoth (Figure 2).

These mobile hunters were highly organized social groups. The Paleoindian period is subdivided into three complexes. The first is the Clovis (9500 to 9000 B.C.) and is characterized by the use of distinctive lanceolate projectile points; named after the complex. This complex is less known due to sparse sites and/or isolated artifacts identified within the Chihuahuan Desert. However, Clovis points have been recovered from the lower Tularosa Basin, Hueco Bolson, and along the Rio Grande (Carmichael 1983, 1985; Krone 1976). These lithic (stone) tools provided a large cutting edge for the processing of megafauna as well as other activities (Bury et al. 2014).



Figure 2. Fossilized mandible, tusk, and tooth from mammoth (photo courtesy of El Paso Museum of Archeology).

The Folsom complex followed the Clovis and ranged between 9000 and 8000 B.C. Distinctive fluted projectile points were utilized during this complex (Wheat 1972). Archeological evidence indicates Folsom people were predominantly bison hunters (Figins 1927; Wheat 1967; Judge 1973; Staley and Turnbow 1995; Bury et al. 2014). Folsom sites include isolated projectile points or arrow heads, small kill sites, butchering stations, and other site types (Krone 1975; Mauldin and O’Leary 1994; Stuart 1997). Excavations at the Fillmore Pass site, located between the Organ and Franklin Mountains just east of the Rio Grande Valley, yielded shallow deposits mixed with later period components, and the largest Folsom assemblage in the region (Carmichael et al. 2003; Bury et al. 2014). The artifact assemblage included 20 Folsom points and preforms, more than 60 channel flakes, and many scraper tools indicating a large base camp setting (Carmichael et al. 2003; Bury et al. 2014). Folsom sites have been identified in the desert lowlands along shorelines of ancient lakes and modern playas, and in caves, canyons, and foothills (Beckes, Dibble, and Freeman 1977; Peter and Mbutu 1993; Zeidler et al. 1996; Camarena Garces et al. 2011; Carmichael 1986; Vasquez 2010). Examples of Paleoindian projectile points are shown in Figure 3. Figure 4 shows examples of Paleoindian scraper tools.

During the Plano/Cody complex, the environment became more arid. Archeological evidence indicates human occupation occurred in areas with access to increasingly diminishing water sources. Communities of these hunters remained focused on bison (Wheat 1972; Cordell 1979). The projectile points and other stone tools retained the technological similarities to the earlier Paleoindian complexes. By the end of this complex, culture changes in technology and subsistence strategies would characterize the Archaic period.



Figure 3. Examples of Paleoindian projectile points (photo courtesy of El Paso Museum of Archeology).



Figure 4. Examples of Paleoindian scraper tools (photo courtesy of El Paso Museum of Archeology).

Archaic Period (6000 B.C.-A.D. 200/50)

Population growth, decreased mobility, increasingly larger sociopolitical units occupying smaller territories, increased trade, and the creation of social networks define the Archaic period (Bury et al. 2014). Expansion of food resources to include a wide variety of plants and animals created economic adaptations that would subsequently increase population densities. Archeological evidence substantiates a more sedentary lifeway through the increased frequency of ground stone implements and addition of domesticated plants to the hunting and gathering subsistence economy.

Work by MacNeish (1993) suggested the local Archaic period should be divided into four phases. For some researchers (Cordell 1997: 111 [as cited in Wills 2003]; Doleman 2005: 115; Bury et al. 2014), the following phases have been applied to local cultural history discussions and appear to remain poorly developed. Nevertheless, the phase sequence allows for a basis with which to begin an understanding of the region's preceramic history.

The Archaic is divided into four phases (MacNeish et al. 1993; MacNeish and Beckett 1987). The phases include Gardner Springs (6000 to 4300 B.C.), Keystone (4300 to 2600 B.C.), Fresnal (2600 to 900 B.C.), and Hueco (900 B.C. to A.D. 200). The presence of distinct projectile point styles and the absence of ceramic technology characterize the Archaic. Anderson (1987, 1993) and Beckett and MacNeish (1994) defined three types of Archaic social unit models for settlement adaptation and land-use patterns. These social groups are categorized as macrobands, microbands, or task forces. Anderson (1987) defined a macroband site as a seasonal occupational area consisting of more than four hearths (fire pits) or large quantities of ground stone, possibly occupied by more than one microband. A microband site is smaller and distinguished by one to three fire pits or hearths. A task force site is even smaller and usually contained one or no hearths, suggesting specialized activities conducted.

Gardner Springs is the earliest Archaic phase and the least understood of the four. Jay, Abasolo, and Bajada projectile point styles are identified within this early assemblage (MacNeish 1993; Beckett and MacNeish 1994). MacNeish (1993) also included end scrapers, flake graters, denticulates, prismatic blades, choppers, mullers, pebble cleavers, milling stones, and pestles in the assemblage. A comparative study of Paleoindian and Early Archaic projectile point lithic materials indicated an increased use of local, opportunistic, and poor-quality material suggesting a significant decrease in mobility (Amick and Lukowski 2006). In other words, people were staying in one location a bit longer than before. Deer and antelope appeared to have been the primary game animals consumed, with little evidence of plant utilization (Anderson 1993).

Preliminary settlement pattern data suggest small bands exploited a variety of microenvironmental zones in the late spring and early summer when seasonal resources became available. During the fall, small groups used a variety of habitats including riverine, basin floors, and mountain terrains (i.e., Castner Range). Winter sites tended to be associated with basin floor playas. Because acorns and pinyon nuts could be stored in the winter, some sites tended to be in higher elevations in the fall (MacNeish 1993; Beckett and MacNeish 1994). Consequently, it is possible that mountain rock shelters were occupied during the fall and winter. Rock shelters are found within Castner Range.

Settlement patterns remained fairly static throughout the Gardner Springs phase and into the subsequent Keystone phase. The Keystone phase marked the beginning of the Middle Archaic across the Southwest. Winter sites are found on the basin floors and along the river, and a variety of habitats were exploited the remainder of the year. The increased presence of ground and pecked stone tools associated with simple pithouse structures and roasting pit features suggested a higher reliance on plants. The Keystone phase is associated with projectile point styles such as Bat Cave, Pelona, Shumla, Gypsum-Almagre, Amargosa, and Todsén. These diagnostic stone tools are found in association with pebble choppers, manos, slab metates, and scrapers. Figure 5 shows an example of a ground and pecked stone tool; quartzite material.



Figure 5. Example of a ground and pecked stone tool (photo courtesy of El Paso Museum of Archeology).

More archeological data are available for the Fresnal phase than for the previous two phases. During this phase, settlement patterns shifted from a seasonal to a semi-base camp strategy. Short-term or specialized task groups exploited a variety of resources from a central base camp (Binford 1980). Visible pit structures increased in number. The earliest radiocarbon dates on corn for the region indicate that cultigens had been introduced during the Fresnal phase (Tagg 1996). Hunting of deer and antelope decreased, as shown in the low numbers of bone fragments within the artifact assemblage. Instead, an increased reliance in rabbit and other small mammals is identified; again, through bone fragments. Plant remains have been recovered from tornillo, mesquite, cut yucca leaves, maize, and Cucurbita pepo (Bury et al. 2014). The large number of identified Fresnal phase sites suggests a significant population increase. The projectile points affiliated with this phase include Fresnal, San Jose, Todsens, Augustin, and Chiricahua (MacNeish 1993; Beckett and MacNeish 1994). Other stone tools included scrapers, large flake choppers, small manos, unifacial and bifacial metates, and bedrock mortars (Figure 6).

The succeeding Hueco phase population may have utilized an increasingly mixed economy. Seasonal, short-term base camps appeared to be associated with specialized task groups exploiting a variety of habitats. The addition of squash and beans to the list of documented cultigens implies expanding horticultural pursuits and may reflect a shift towards more semi-permanent occupations. In addition, large numbers of Hueco sites found in a variety of habitats, indicate expanded land-use patterns. Projectile point styles identified with this Late Archaic phase include Hueco, San Pedro, Armijo, and Hatch (Beckett and MacNeish 1994). Other artifacts may have included small disk scrapers and choppers, small pointed flakes, trough metates, one-handed and two-handed manos, paint palettes, coiled baskets, and sandals (Lehmer 1948; MacNeish 1993). The Hueco phase people may have set the foundation for strategies employed by later Mesilla phase groups.



Figure 6. Mortar holes located on Castner Range (Anonymous, circa. 1970s).

Formative Period (A.D. 250 to 1500/50)

The Formative period is marked by the presence of ceramics and, locally, has been divided into three phases: Mesilla, Doña Ana, and El Paso (Lehmer 1948). The adoption of ceramics played a major role in gradually increasing sedentism and the use of cultigens by providing a secure means of storing cached foodstuffs. Archeological evidence has indicated semi-sedentary people lived in villages that frequently included comparably large, communal/socio-religious structures (Whalen 1994). The more mobile aspects of Formative period subsistence practices are represented by artifact scatters that predominantly include thermal features that further suggest foraging and/or logistical subsistence activities.

The early Mesilla phase (A.D. 250 to 750) appears to represent a continuation of the Hueco phase subsistence pattern, with the addition of undecorated brownware ceramics referred to as El Paso Brown (Whalen 1994; Figure 7). The first ceramic style introduced into the region was tecomates from Mesoamerica. The tecomate is a gourd-like jar, neckless, with a restricted opening often found in association with semi-sedentary people (Scott 1985; Arnold 1997; Komulainen-Dillenburg and Perez 2013). According to Neff (1993), specific ceramic traits come from “shared pottery-making practices” (Neff 1993: 27). Within the region, certain traits were modified and early brownware typically exhibited a distinctive tapering of vessel rims or lips, commonly referred to as pinched rims. Brush huts and pit structures comprise the types of houses, and large pit structures suspected to have served communal functions typically occur on more intensively occupied sites. Subsistence evidently remained focused on hunting and gathering, with horticultural activities constituting a secondary resource (Carmichael 1981, 1985, 1990).

Most early Mesilla phase sites reflect high levels of mobility, with even the structural examples indicating only brief (i.e., seasonal) periods of sedentism (Church and Sale 2003). Mesilla phase habitation sites, however, demonstrate increased occupational intensity (or duration) over the Late Archaic period predecessors (Whalen 1994).

The late Mesilla phase (A.D. 750 to 1100) is seen as a time of population increase, more semi-permanent habitations, and increased use of cultigens (Hard 1983a; Whalen 1994). The most readily detectable changes in ceramic assemblages associated with the late Mesilla phase include a decrease in brownware

jar rim taper, along with the addition of Mimbres Black-on-white and, occasionally, San Francisco Red ware types. Although the examples are extremely limited, the first appearance of paint decorations on the local brownware (i.e., El Paso Bichrome) is reported for the late Mesilla phase.



Figure 7. Examples of El Paso Brown vessels (photo courtesy of El Paso Museum of Archeology).

The Doña Ana phase began around A.D. 1100 and continued until about A.D. 1200. Miller (2005) suggested the phase get expanded to the period of A.D. 1000 to 1275/1300 in order to account for the “changing settlement and technological organization” (Miller et al. 2009: 3-7). Rectangular pit structures become common during the Doña Ana phase, although Lehmer’s (1948) excavations at Los Tules suggest that similar examples may have been present during the late Mesilla phase. Paint decorations become prominent on the local brownware, resulting in assemblages dominated by El Paso Bichrome and El Paso Polychrome. In addition, Mimbres Black-on-white, Chupadero Black-on-white, Three Rivers Red-on-terracotta, and St. Johns Polychrome are included in the list of intrusive ceramics. Meanwhile, the use of cultigens continues to increase during the Doña Ana phase, but groups probably continued to employ several land-use strategies.

The El Paso phase (A.D. 1200 to 1450) represents the culmination of the Formative period in the Jornada culture region (El Paso and surrounding areas) and includes evidence for several large aggregated population centers near permanent water sources (Lehmer 1948; Sale and Laumbach 1989; Bentley 1993). In the Hueco Bolson and Tularosa Basin (and presumably in the nearby Mesilla Bolson), architecture during the El Paso phase is exemplified by linear, contiguous puddled adobe pueblo room blocks. Although a few large plaza-style pueblos have been reported, most of the pueblos include fewer than 20 rooms (Moore 1947; Miller and Graves 2006). El Paso phase adobe field houses, as well as both round and rectangular pit structures, are also reported (Browning et al. 1992; Komulainen-Dillenburg et al. 2012).

Ceramic assemblages during this phase reflect increasing contacts with the western Mogollon region of southeast Arizona and southwest New Mexico, northwest Chihuahua, east central Arizona, northwest New Mexico, and the northern frontiers of the Jornada Mogollon area. Ceramic types such as Gila Polychrome, Lincoln Black-on-red, Ramos Polychrome, Playas Red (Figure 8), and Seco Corrugated comprise the dominant intrusive wares. The locally produced El Paso Polychrome developed everted rims and completely replaced undecorated brownware during the El Paso phase. It also began to appear in contexts well beyond the Jornada culture area. The widespread distribution of El Paso Polychrome, along

with the array of intrusive ceramic types, a noted increase in imported shell, and evidence of Mesoamerican influences reflected in rock art, indicate that extra-regional interaction increased markedly during the El Paso phase.

The presence of corn, along with increased evidence of beans and squash identified in El Paso phase habitation sites, indicated that the use of cultigens was at its peak. Although agriculture may have provided an important subsistence resource, wild plants continued to play a major dietary role (Bradley 1983).

The pueblos of the Jornada region were abandoned around A.D. 1450, but the cause of this collapse is presently not well understood. The local inhabitants encountered during De Vaca's expedition in 1535 were hunter-gatherers, living in huts along the Rio Grande River. The relationship of these to the earlier sedentary occupants (descendants or unrelated, etc.) has not been determined.

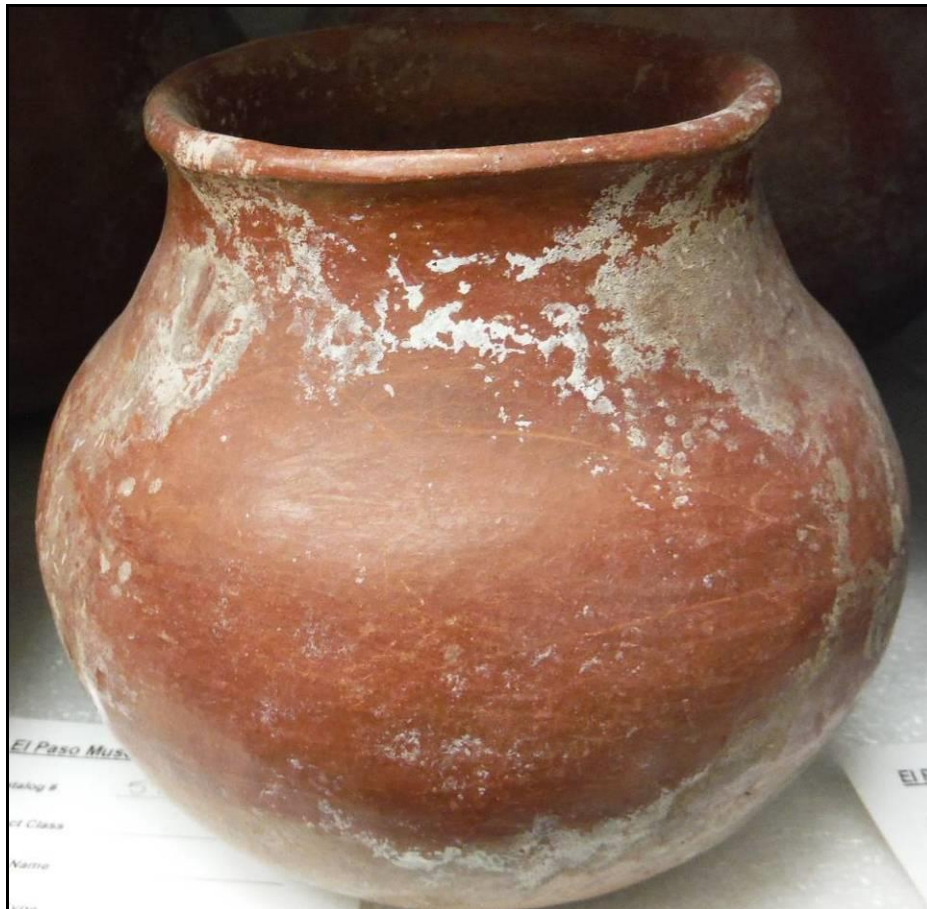


Figure 8. Example of a Playas Red vessel (photo courtesy of El Paso Museum of Archeology).

Protohistoric Period

The period between the end of the El Paso phase and Spanish contact is not well known for the region (Miller 2001). What is known is that indigenous people were displaced for a variety of reasons. Climate changes (i.e., wide spread drought), intrusive populations in search of resources, internal community strife, and perhaps the breakdown of social networks may have contributed to a trend towards hunting and gathering once again.

The Manso, Suma, and Jumano Indians inhabited the El Paso Valley on both sides of the Rio Grande River. The Manso and Suma Indians were primarily nomadic, with limited horticulture supplementing their subsistence needs. Both groups relied on fishing, hunting of deer and bison, and gathering shellfish

and a variety of plants. The primary cultigen for the Manso and Suma was corn (Gerald 1973; Griffin 1983). The Jumano Indians lived east of the present El Paso area. The Jumano people were also hunters and gatherers. One band, however, lived and farmed at La Junta, near the confluence of the Rio Grande River and Rio Conchos. Based on Spanish documents, the Manso and Suma were semi-nomadic. Archeological evidence further substantiates the claim based on occupation remains identified at least 10 km west of Fort Bliss Military Installation (Batcho 1987; Batcho et al. 1985; Miller 2001).

Prehistoric Presence on Castner Range

An archeological site-file search was conducted for the Castner Range area. The Texas Historical Commission's (THC) ATLAS (on-line) database was used. A total of 41 prehistoric and historic archeological sites have been identified within the area. Table 2 lists the prehistoric archeological sites identified within Castner Range.

The Castner Range settlements appeared to be on the eastern alluvial fans of the Franklin Mountains. Nearby canyons like Fusselman (*sic*) Canyon provided water during the rainy season. Cottonwood Springs, Indian Springs (Figure 9), Mundy Springs, and Whispering Springs provided permanent sources of water (Perez et al. 2003). Occupation of the area appeared to continue into the Protohistoric and Historic periods.

Many of the prehistoric sites depict open campsites with associated remains of tool and food processing activities. In addition, several sites are rock shelters with pictographs and petroglyphs with associated remains of seasonal occupation. The prehistoric sites identified within Castner Range substantiate the presence of human occupation described above. Although Paleoindian peoples may not have been represented in the archeological record within Castner Range, Early Archaic to Formative period occupations are present. Many of these prehistoric sites are no longer extant most likely due to natural impacts like flash flooding that washed away surface artifacts and/or man-made impacts: construction of Loop 375 and improvements, Fusselman Canyon Dam, artillery range, public collection of artifacts, and defacement of rock art. For those that remain (rock shelters, pictographs) protection is imperative in order to preserve for future research or simply to appreciate and learn about prehistoric peoples. Pictographs and petroglyphs are not just rock art. They are maps, storylines, prayers, territory markers, and/or simply someone wanting to leave their mark behind.

Fusselman Canyon Rock Art District (EPAS-44)

In 1967, rock art was identified within a cave (Green 1965). The site was recorded as Fusselman Canyon Rock Art (EPAS-44). The panels depicted animal footprints, geometric designs, a human handprint, and a bird's head (Figure 10). The site was located on the east slope of the Franklin Mountains and consisted of petroglyphs associated with the El Paso phase, dated to approximately A.D. 1350 (Green 1965). The time frame or cultural affiliation was determined by the designs also found on pottery and arrow shaft straighteners from other El Paso phase sites (Green 1965). The Fusselman Canyon Rock Art District is currently a designated National Registered District, a federally protected site.

Table 2. Prehistoric Archeological Sites Identified within Castner Range

State No.	Site Type	Time Period	NRHP status	Comment
41EP21	Camp w/bedrock mortars	Prehistoric: Mesilla to Doña Ana	NE	1976: 3 scrapers, 2 knives, large hammerstone, 1 obsidian projectile point, 6 El Paso Brown sherds, 3 Jornada Brown sherds, 1 Brown corrugated sherd; 1999
41EP23	White Rock Shelter/Fusselman Canyon Rock Art District	Mesilla/Protohistoric/Apache	E	1966: El Paso Brown, lithic tools; 1976: 21 bedrock mortars; 1997: 3 panels of pictographs and 2 bedrock mortars; 2007
41EP326	Artifact Scatter	Prehistoric	NE-mitigated	1976; 2005
41EP387	No Data	No Data	E	1999; 2013
41EP388	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data
41EP389	No data	Prehistoric/Historic	E	1999
41EP391	Camp	Prehistoric	NE	1976; 1999
41EP392	Camp w/bedrock mortars	Prehistoric-El Paso phase	NE; E	1976; 1999; 2005
41EP394	Camp/bedrock mortars	Prehistoric	NE	1976; 1999
41EP397	Bedrock Mortars	Prehistoric	NE	1976; 1999
41EP400	Lithic scatter	Prehistoric	E; NE	1995; 1999
41EP401	Camp w/lithic scatter	Prehistoric-Historic (1880-1900)	NE	1976; 1999
41EP402	Camp w/bedrock mortars	Prehistoric	NE	1976: 24-bedrock mortars, lithic tools; 1999
41EP403	Artifact Scatter	Prehistoric	NE	1999; 2014
41EP404	No data	Prehistoric	NE	1999
41EP885	Medium camp, lithic scatter	Prehistoric	NE	1976; 1985: 1 blade-like flake, flakes and debitage
41EP888	No data	Prehistoric	NE	1999
41EP889	Lithic scatter	Prehistoric	NE	1976; 1985; 1999
41EP890	Lithic scatter	Prehistoric	NE	1976; 1985; 1999
41EP4850	Lithic scatter	Prehistoric	NE	1994; 1999
41EP4851	Paddle Cave, 95-1	Prehistoric	NE	1995; 1999
41EP4852	Camp	Prehistoric	NE	1995; 1999
41EP4853	Lithic scatter	Prehistoric	NE	1995; 1999
41EP5330	White Rock Shelter #2	Prehistoric	Undetermined	1997: pictographs
41EP5468	Castner Petroglyphs	Prehistoric	Undetermined	1985; 2000
41EP5475	Bedrock Mortars	Prehistoric	NE	1976; 2006
41EP5476	Camp w/lithic scatter	Prehistoric	Undetermined	1999
41EP6783	Mortar hole	Prehistoric	NE	2 Thunderbird rhyolite lithic tools, 2011

NRHP: National Register of Historic Places; E: Eligible, NE: Not Eligible

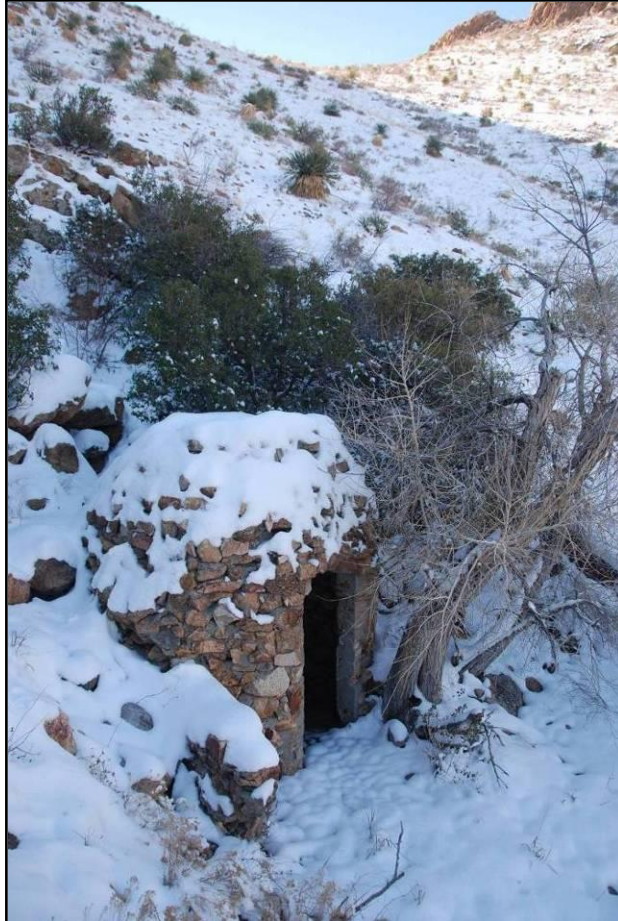


Figure 9. Indian Springs (Anonymous, circa. 1970s).

White Rock Cave Site (EPAS-49)

In 1967, White Rock Cave (EPAS-49) was recorded (Brice and Phillips 1967). The site is located on the east side of the Franklin Mountains, near Fusselman Canyon and Smugglers Pass. The site consisted of several rock shelters, a shallow cave, bedrock mortars, and pictographs. The pictographs were visible on the overhangs and undersides of fallen and stacked granitic boulders. Artifacts found on the surface consisted of ceramics and lithics associated with the late Mesilla phase. The ceramic assemblage consisted of El Paso Brown, Mimbres Classic Black-on-white, Chupadero Black-on-white, and undetermined polished ware. Lithic tools and projectile points (arrow heads) were collected from an artifact concentration (midden) below the rock shelters.

After the documentation of White Rock Cave, Green (1967) presented his interpretation of the pictographs. He determined that the geometric designs and snake pictographs at White Rock Cave were also present in the Hueco Tanks area to the east. Other pictographs at White Rock Cave were similar to those found in Mexican sites. Green (1967) concluded that the White Rock Cave pictographs were likely associated with the Western Archaic or Desert Culture (6000 B.C. to A.D. 600). We can further speculate by Green's assessment that pictographs at White Rock Cave, Hueco Tanks, and those at "Mexican" sites shared a cultural interaction. Perhaps these folks were the same ones who visited/inhabited White Rock Cave during a specific time of the year and travelled to Hueco Tanks for the other part.



Figure 10. Petroglyphs associated with Fusselman Canyon (Anonymous 2015).

In 1972, a survey revisited many of the prehistoric archeological sites within Castner Range. The rock shelters and rock art panels showed evidence of being used “as shooting targets” (Bilbo 1976).

Castner Annex Range Dam Site (EPAS-10)

In 1966, investigations were conducted by the universities of El Paso (Centennial Museum) and Austin. One survey collected Mimbres Classic Black-on-white, Mimbres Boldface, El Paso Brown, Chupadero Black-on-white, Alma Plain, Playas Red, and Playas Red incised pottery fragments. The other survey collected El Paso Polychrome, Chupadero Black-on-white, Mimbres Black-on-white, and Casa Colorado Black-on-white pottery pieces. The Mimbres Black-on-white was recovered from excavations. In 1972, the El Paso Archeological Society (EPAS) surveyed and excavated a multicomponent site, with the Mesilla phase the predominant time frame (Bilbo 1972). The site consisted of numerous clusters of features, two burials (excavated and removed), several fire-cracked rock middens (roasting pits) with associated artifacts, and a variety of ceramics. By 1972, intensive excavations exposed a pithouse structure with a variety of ceramics still on the floor surface. Other artifacts associated with the pithouse structure were a unifacial mano, unidentified ceramics, a large portion of a Mimbres bowl, and a possible bone tool. Based on the artifact assemblage for Castner Annex Range Dam Site, indigenous peoples occupied the area throughout the Formative period (A.D. 250 to 1500/50). They kept coming back to this particular location.

Castner Range Petroglyph Site

In 1973, Robin Hoffer located rock art north of Fusselman Canyon. Further documentation was conducted in 1981 by Kelly Ann Embrey. Embrey identified about 27 figures and designated the area as Castner Range Petroglyphs. Of the 27 figures, only 12 were properly recorded and classified. The remaining figures appeared faded or a distinct pattern could not be determined. However, with the recent technology of DStretch, these same faded figures could be brought out and further investigated.

In 1975 and 1976, two surveys were conducted in the Franklin Mountains (Bilbo n.d.; Way 1977). The first investigation identified 14 prehistoric sites and several historic sites (Bilbo n.d.). The sites consisted of hearths, pottery, and bedrock mortars. The second survey located an additional 20 prehistoric sites and revisited seven previously recorded sites (Way 1977). All of the sites were lithic scatters indicating the possibility of opportunistic stone tool making activities.

In 1978, five prehistoric sites were investigated and later recorded as the Castner Range Archaeological District (Hard 1983b). During the investigation, archeologists recorded at least 22 fire pits. Additional investigations were conducted to determine the soil stratigraphy as well as vegetation studies to identify plants present during the time periods the area was inhabited. Specialized studies indicated that the sites had been occupied between 900 B.C. and A.D. 1400, with the predominant human occupation occurring during the late Mesilla phase (A.D. 700 to 1000).

The Historic Period on Castner Range: Mining in El Paso, Texas

The El Paso, Texas area began as a mining town in 1847. Silver and copper mines in the Organ Mountains brought in miners. California prospectors used the small mining town as a base station. In addition, mail service to and from the El Paso, Texas area further pushed the developing mining town towards a permanent community. Mail service from established cities such as San Antonio and Santa Fe via El Paso, Texas began in 1851.

By 1858, mail service from San Antonio to San Diego by way of El Paso, Texas further increased the need for an established community. Surveyors platted a new townsite and named it El Paso as more and more Americans settled the area. By 1860, the newly recognized city of El Paso, Texas listed 428 residents. More than 4,000 residents lived across the border in El Paso del Norte, Chihuahua (now Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico) (Metz 1988).

Nevertheless, the Franklin Mountains remained fairly off-limits to townsfolk since Apache and Comanche raiders used the mountains as their base for raiding the river settlements (Miles 2016). Outlaws also used the mountains as havens. In 1890, deputy U.S. Marshall and Texas Ranger Charles H. Fusselman was killed in a shootout with rustlers (Miles 2016; Historical Marker #12913). Local rancher, John Barnes had reported that his cattle and horses had been stolen. Fusselman, Barnes, and city policeman George Herold chased the rustlers into the Franklins. A shootout occurred and Fusselman was killed. After ten years of pursuit, outlaw Geronimo Parra was captured and “legally hanged in January 1900 in El Paso” (Historical Marker #12913).

By 1909, the El Paso Tin Mining and Smelting Company founded a mine in the Franklins. The venture proved unsuccessful and only yielded 160, 100-pound pigs of tin. The mining was stopped in 1915 (Miles 2016). The tin mine would briefly reopen in 1942, during World War II. The lack of abundant tin caused the mine to close again.

The historic sites associated with mining within Castner Range were recorded as “individual prospector” holes. These sites are located closer to the east slope of the Franklin Mountains. Table 3 summarizes the historic archeological sites identified on Castner Range.

Table 3. Mining and Military Historic Sites Identified within Castner Range

State No.	Site Type	Time Period	NRHP status	Comment
41EP390	Castner Canyon Prospects	Historic	NE	1976: 6-prospect holes; 1999
41EP393	Indian Spring Mine & Spring	Historic-1930	Undetermined	1976: cobble hut & mine shaft; 1999
41EP395	Rock Structure	Historic	NE	1976: circular wall structure; 1999
41EP398	Indian Peak Mine	Historic-ca. 1930	NE	1999: prospect holes in shallow caves
41EP5335	Modern Trash Dump	Historic-1930s to 1970s	NE	2006
41EP5470	Indian Peak Navigation Light	Historic-ca. 1918	Undetermined	2000: tin structure
41EP5471	Rock Wall	Historic-1930	NE	1999: unmortared rock wall
41EP5472	Rock Cairns	Historic Military	NE	2000; 2003; 2011
41EP5473	Military	Historic Military-1940	E	2003
41EP5474	Indian Spring Well	Historic-1930	Undetermined	1976; 2000
41EP5477	Rock Structure	Historic	Undetermined	1976; 2000: circular wall structure
41EP5733	Can Dump	Historic	NE	2005
41EP6009	El Paso Tin Mine	Historic-ca. 1909-1911, 1940s	E	2007

NRHP: National Register of Historic Places; E: Eligible, NE: Not Eligible

The Creation of Castner Range

Between 1920 and 1940, the increase in soldier population led to the expansion of the Fort Bliss Military Installation. In 1923, Major General Robert L. Howze, Commanding General of Fort Bliss, requested additional land for the enlargement of the reservation facilities. Although at this time Howze was not granted permission to purchase land, by 1925 and 1926 an additional 1,058 acres and 3,473 acres were purchased for Biggs Army Air Field and Castner Target Range, respectively (James B Murray Papers, 1948a).

In 1926, Brigadier General Joseph G. Castner was in command and responsible for the purchase of land for Biggs Army Air Field and Castner Target Range (Metz 1988:131). By 1936, the size of Castner Range remained at 3,473 acres. Fort Bliss voiced its frustration with the limited size and distance of Castner Range. The range was “too far from the post for daily training” and too small for other exercises. Despite its size, most of the range was within rocky mountainous terrain (James B. Murray Papers, 1948b). In 1939, Castner Target Range was expanded by an additional 4,800 acres purchased from private landowners (James B Murray Papers, 1948a).

Castner Target Range was now part of a much larger installation. By the mid-1930s, world events threatened to directly affect the United States. During the Great Depression, Americans viewed large-scale military expansion with apprehension. Military leaders, on the other hand, wanted all aspects of the armed forces ready for last minute deployment.

Castner Target Range was three and a half miles north of the northwest corner of the main post and consisted of 8,273 acres. The range was used as an impact area, testing a variety of ordnance. Between 1939 and 1966, stokes mortar shells, eight-inch Coast Artillery shells, and many types and calibers of field and air defense artillery were used.

Of particular interest is site 41EP5473. The general location of the site is on the east-facing alluvial fan of the Franklin Mountains. The site is significant due to its type: staging area for an Anti-Mechanized Target Firing Range built in 1940 (McConnell 1941; Perez et al. 2003). A prehistoric component was identified. The prehistoric items included the remains of a hearth, one brown ceramic fragment, one Three Rivers Red-on-terracotta piece, two chert flakes, two basalt flakes, and two quartzite flakes (Perez et al. 2003). The prehistoric artifact assemblage indicated a Formative period occupation. During the 2003

investigation (Perez et al. 2003), ordnance and explosive clean-up/removal was pending (Perez et al. 2003: 66).

The Anti-Mechanized Target area entailed a high speed course for firing antitank weapons; training for combat during World War II. A target car was placed on a narrow gauge railroad track that extended downhill for about 1.1 miles. The car was the target for a variety of weapons. The speed of the car was dependent on the added or reduced weight.

After 1966, live-firing ceased and only limited use of the area was allowed. The City of El Paso exchanged the C. Ralph Meyer Range and received \$57,338.79 for a portion of the Castner Range firing location in order to build Woodrow Bean Transmountain Dr (Loop 375) and US 54-Patriot Freeway. Before the exchange was made, the federal government spent an additional \$294,000 for improvements to Castner Range. In 1968, Woodrow Bean Transmountain Dr (Loop 375) and US 54-Patriot Freeway were completed. Very few structures remain on Castner Range today. An abandoned well and a replica of a Vietnamese village, however, can still be seen (Policy Letter from AKBAAF to the Commanding General, Fourth United States Army, 11 May 1971).

Cultural Significance

As listed in the Introduction of this report, soap tree yucca, creosote bush, honey mesquite, lechugilla, tepary bean, and various cacti dominate and characterize the plant communities within Castner Range. Prehistorically and historically, these plants have been used by Native Americans (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016; Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.3). A variety of plant remains have been recovered from pithouses, middens, roasting pits, hearths, and storage pits (Miller et al. 2009). These sites have been located on Fort Bliss, Hueco, Tularosa, and Mesilla basins. These sites have dated to the Formative period (A.D. 200/400 to 1450) (Miller et al. 2009). Similar sites on Castner Range (previously listed and discussed above) had potential to yield the same results. However, special analyses were not conducted due to time constraints and funding.

Nevertheless, plants recovered from prehistoric residential, rock-lined pits, and/or earth oven sites also represent modern species present on Castner Range. The following is a list of those plant remains (Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.5) and their use by Native Americans, when possible (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016):

Tepary bean (*Phaseolus acutifolius*) (Figure 11) is a cultigen harvested by prehistoric and modern Native Americans. As presented in a pending Native Plants Brochure produced by Leasburg Dam State Park, New Mexico (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016), the tepary bean is considered the “Great-great Grandmother of many of our more modern beans.” The bean was gathered during the rainy season, planted in locations where natural water run-off occurred, and/or planted in small plots (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016). In addition, the tepary bean is hearty in that it can lay dormant “in times of drought and then appear in abundance in times of rain” (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016). The cultigen is highly nutritious and is usually found in “areas where several cultural periods have left evidence of their use” (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016).

Buffalo gourd (*Cucurbita foetidissima*) is also a cultigen harvested by prehistoric people (Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.5; Figure 12). The seeds were a food source. The gourd was dried and used as utensils, containers, or rattles (Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.3). In addition, the roots were mainly used for salves but also as a laxative (Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.3).



Figure 11. Tepary bean on Castner Range (Photo courtesy of John Miller).



Figure 12. Gourd on El Paso Museum of Archeology grounds (Janae' Renaud Field 2016)

Western honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa/juliflora*) was/is used as a fuel source for heating and cooking. According to Mescalero Apache Medicine Man Paul Ortega (Richins 2011), the sap from the older tree trunks and juice from leaves could be used as an antiseptic to treat irritated eyes and pink eye, salve for minor cuts and abrasions, or “waterproofing material for hand woven water jars by Navajos and Apaches” (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016). The dried branches were used for structural building. Ripe pods were roasted, ground and the flour used to make a “warm Winter time drink known as *atole*” (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016). Mesquite flour could also be used to make a tortilla or bread (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016). During raiding by Apaches and others, very old dry branches were used at the camps to avoid detection since the wood was nearly smokeless (Personal Communication Alex Mares

2016). Special analyses of ground-stone implements have yielded plant enzymes associated with honey mesquite.

Native American and Native Mexican peoples have used a variety of prickly pear cacti (*Opuntia sp.*) (cane cholla, tree cholla, pencil cholla, Christmas cactus) as a food source (*tunas*, pads). According to Katherine Zeratsky, R.D., L.D. (www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/expert-answers/prickly-pear-cactusfaq-20057771), prickly pear is “promoted to control diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, and hangovers,” although more “research is needed to confirm these benefits.” Yet, Native Americans and Native Mexican peoples have consumed the succulent for thousands of years. One species of cholla had a golden yellow colored pod. Once dried, it was crushed into a powder by using a metate or mortar and pestle. The Native Plants Brochure (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016) stated that the powdered pod was mixed with some water and made into a poultice to treat scratches, minor abrasions, and/or irritated skin. In addition, the powdered pod was used to dye wool and other fiber to use in a variety of yellow shades that would be woven into textiles (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016).

Lechugilla (*Agave lechuguilla*) is a succulent and processed as a source of fiber. The roots were also used as a soap (disinfectant) substitute (Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.3). The succulent was roasted in earth ovens. After several days, Native peoples would return and process the food source for easier transport. Large agave knives, scrapers, pottery sherds, and lithic flake debris have been recovered in association with earth ovens and/or rock-lined pits.

Mescalero Apache Medicine Man Paul Ortega (Richins 2011) stated that the mescal plant (*Agave parryi*) is primarily used as a food source. The sap is collected and fermented as a mild liquor (*pulque*). When distilled it produces mescal or tequila. Other tribes use it to treat wounds, rashes, chapped lips, and sunburn.

A variety of grass (Gramineae family) remains have been recovered in archeological sites (Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.3). Seed grains were used for consumption and the stems for a fuel source, basketry, and/or for prayer sticks (i.e., tobosa grass) (Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.3).

Four-wing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*) or Chamiso is considered a medicinal plant to a variety of Native peoples (Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.3). The seed pod was also a food source, the leaves were used as a seasoning, and the roots and blossoms as a salve (Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.3). The seed pods were harvested in late Summer and Fall and stored for use during the Winter (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016). In addition, the seeds were burned to an ash and added to mesquite or corn dough to enhance the flavor and as a binder to keep the bread or tortilla from flaking apart (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016). Also, the inner bark was used to produce a purple dye (Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.3).

According to Mescalero Apache Medicine Man Paul Ortega (Richins 2011), soaptree yucca (*Yucca elata*) root was and is used as a shampoo and antiseptic, the raw fruit pods have a mild laxative effect, and the stalk/trunk can be used in a tobacco mix, also used for treating a sore throat. The leaves are fibrous and used to make baskets and sandals. Finally, soaptree yucca continues to be used in fertility rites.

Creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) or greasewood was used mainly as a medicinal plant (Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.3).

The stalks of ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*) were used by Naïve American and Native Mexican peoples for building pens, corrals, arbors, and shelters (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016; Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.3). The stalks used were placed in the ground as fencing in corrals, pens, or structure walls, could be watered and eventually “would root and flower” (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016). The stalks were cut in January through February to be used as roofing material for shade shelters (*enramadas*) or as walls for brush shelters (*jacales*) (Personal Communication Alex Mares 2016).

Sand sagebrush (*Artemisia filifolia*) has a variety of medicinal uses, mainly salves (Miller et al. 2009: Table 2.3).

Summary

The area currently known as Castner Range has been utilized since the Early Archaic period. Archeological evidence in the form of hearths, structure remains (pithouses), pictographs and petroglyphs (rock art), various lithic (stone) tools, and pottery pieces confirm the extensive human occupation of this area. The area provided seasonal shelter, food, wood for heating/cooking, several water sources, and an endless supply of lithic material for making tools (i.e., knives, scrapers, choppers, manos and metates, along with pestles and mortars [both hand-sized and bedrock mortars]). Tools were used for hunting (arrows and arrow heads) and processing food. Pottery was introduced via trade from other communities (Mimbres, Casas Grandes, etc.). In addition, the natural landscape of the Franklin Mountains provided a safe haven against enemies.

During the Historic period, the area was pretty much left to the Comanche, Apache, and bandits or cattle rustlers who used it for hiding out. By the 1900s, a tin mine was opened in hopes of cashing-in on the natural resource. Unfortunately, the venture proved unsuccessful and would eventually close.

Figure 13 (Figure 1.0-3 in Parsons Engineering Science, Inc. 1998: 17) provides a timeline for activities on Castner Range. As noted, several deaths were caused by detonation in 1955 and 1962. Periodic surface sweeps of Castner Range were conducted in the 1970s, 1980s, and again during the 1990s.

By the mid-1920s, Fort Bliss acquired acreage and created Castner Target Range. Because of the landscape, the range would be extensively utilized for training of antitank weaponry during World War II, Korean War, and the Vietnam War (or conflict).

By 1966, live-firing ceased and only limited use of the area was allowed. The City of El Paso was expanding and Woodrow Bean Transmountain Dr (Loop 375) would be constructed. At that point, all military activity stopped.

Various Native American groups continue to view the Franklin Mountains as a sacred area because of the vegetation found that is still utilized in ceremonies. Specifically, the Mescalero Apache continue to visit the area to collect agave for puberty ceremonies.

Today, signs along the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) right-of-way warn El Pasoans of the potential dangers of a military range. Unexploded ordnance is still found on Castner Range, making it dangerous for off-trail hiking, mountain biking, or other recreational activity. Man-made impacts to naturally occurring arroyos have caused a shift in the direction of water run-off, creating extensive and costly damage to roadways, communities, and commercial development further down in the basin (severe flashing flooding and water run-off in 2013 and 2014).

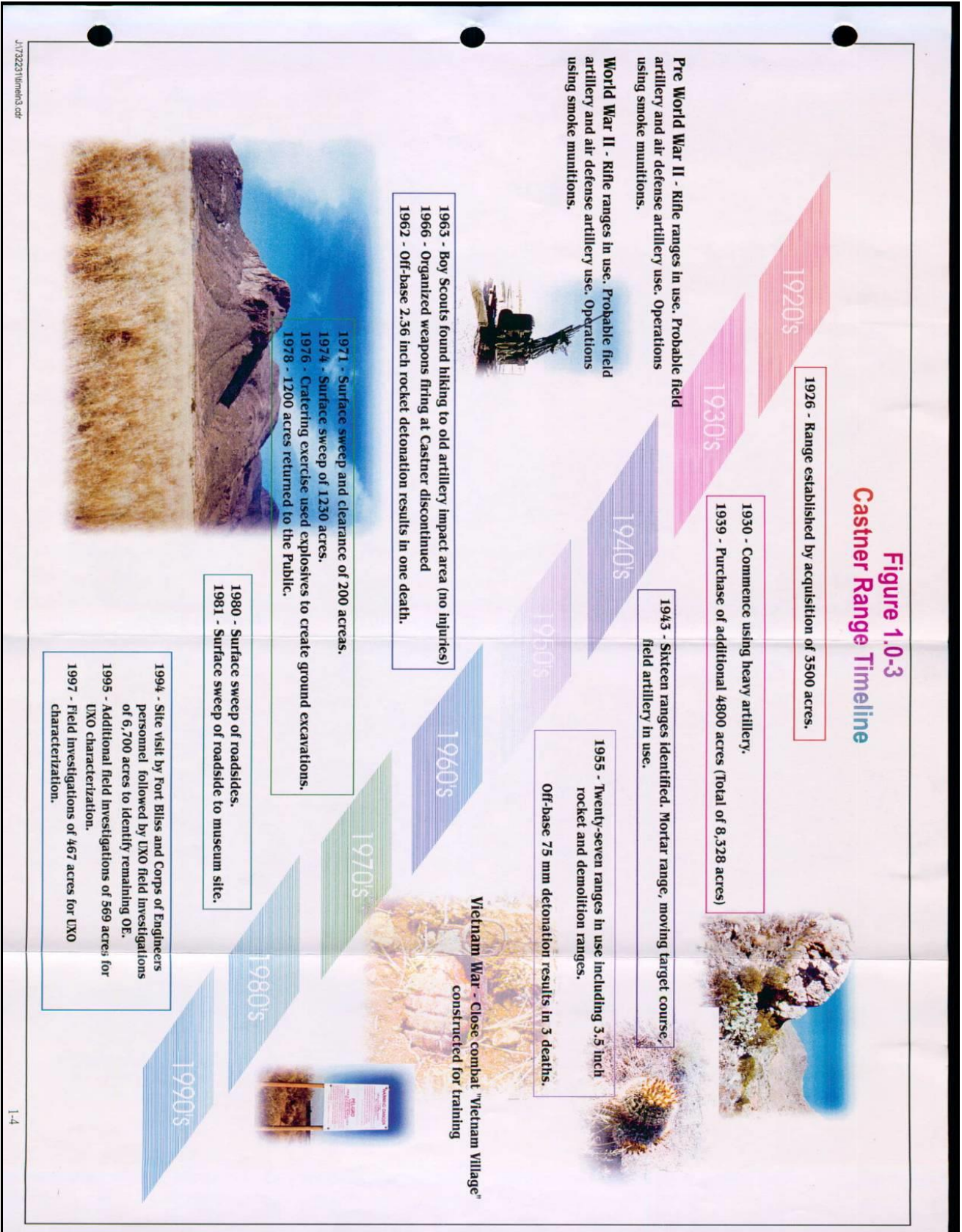


Figure 13. Timeline for Castner Range (Figure 1.0-3 in Parsons Engineering Science, Inc. 1998).



Figure 14. Castner Range, facing north from edge of roadway.

Currently, Castner Range is one of the last “open spaces” in El Paso (Figure 14). The location of the El Paso Museum of Archeology within Castner Range provides a glimpse of a landscape utilized by prehistoric people (Figure 15). On the grounds of the El Paso Museum of Archeology, several trails lead to depictions of prehistoric lifeways (i.e., wikiup, teepee poles, rock midden) (Figure 16). In addition, the various plants along the trails provide the visitor with a good understanding of food resources available to prehistoric peoples.



Figure 15. Franklin Mountains, from El Paso Museum of Archeology.



Figure 16. Trails on El Paso Museum of Archeology grounds.



Figure 17. Mexican Poppies on Castner Range (Courtesy of Mark Clune).

The annual Franklin Mountains Poppies Preservation Celebration (aka., Poppies Festival) is held on the grounds of the El Paso Museum of Archeology. In years when rains have been plentiful, beautiful Mexican poppies blanket the Castner Range landscape and surrounding areas (Figure 17).

The Ysleta Pueblo del Sur Youth Dancers are part of the cultural experience found at the Poppies Festival (Figures 18-20). The festival celebrates the landscape, the flora and fauna, as well as the connection humans have held to the area. Educational programs are sponsored by the Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition, El Paso Zoo, Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary near Albuquerque, New Mexico, Texas Parks and Wildlife, El Paso Archeological Society, Frontera Land Alliance, El Paso Museum of Archeology, El Paso Community Foundation, El Paso Community College, and private individuals. Archery and atlatl demonstrations are conducted by the Citadel of the Southern Pass, Local Chapter of the Society of Creative Anachronism (Archery) and staff from the El Paso Museum of Archeology (atlatl). Folks come out to the area even when the poppies have decided not to bloom!



Figure 18. Ysleta Pueblo del Sur Youth Dancers prepare for their performance during the Poppies Festival, 2016.



Figure 19. Ysleta Pueblo del Sur Youth Dancers performing at the Poppies Festival, 2016.



Figure 20. Ysleta Pueblo del Sur Youth Dancer, Poppies Festival 2016.

Approximately 41 archeological sites have been identified and recorded on Castner Range and one as recent as 2011 (Burt 2011). Archeological sites located at the east-facing base of the Franklin Mountains within Castner Range have either washed away (rather than naturally covered by silt) due to man-made impacts or have been destroyed by those same impacts. Fusselman Canyon Rock Art District, a federally protected site, rock shelters, and other rock art within Castner Range, close to roadways or trails, are in danger of being destroyed by man-made impacts or other types of vandalism.

Ironically, and although extremely dangerous, unexploded ordnance present on Castner Range has inadvertently provided a welcomed result: it has kept the overall Castner Range from extensive vandalism, off-road recreational vehicle activities, and commercial, industrial, and/or residential development. Castner Range, Fort Bliss is owned by the Department of Defense and due to the presence of UXOs, people are not allowed on the land. As Ms. Judy Ackerman once said to Bryan Gatchell of the *Fort Bliss Bugle*, “This land is in gorgeous condition today thanks to the stewardship of Fort Bliss and the unexploded ordnance” (fortblissbugle.com/visitors-enjoy-celebration-of-poppies-now-poppy-free/).

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