



THE CALF CREEK HORIZON

A Mid-Holocene Hunter-Gatherer Adaptation in the
Central and Southern Plains of North America



EDITED BY JON C. LOHSE, MARJORIE A. DUNCAN, AND DON G. WYCKOFF

CONTENTS

Preface

PART ONE: ENVIRONMENTAL AND TEMPORAL CONTEXTS

Chapter 1. The Calf Creek Horizon: Mid-Holocene Adaptations in North America
by Jon C. Lohse, Don G. Wyckoff, and Marjorie Duncan

Chapter 2. Bison across the Holocene: What Did Calf Creek Foragers Hunt?
by Kristen Carlson and Leland Bement

Chapter 3. A Precise Chronology for Calf Creek
by Jon C. Lohse, Brendan J. Culleton, and Douglas J. Kennett

Chapter 4. Phytolith (Biogenic Silica) Insights into the Mid-Holocene Calf Creek
Paleoenvironment, by J. Byron Sudbury

Chapter 5. Diatom Paleoenvironmental Analysis of Calf Creek Sediments from the
Burnham Homestead Site (34WO69), Woods County, Oklahoma
by Barbara Winsborough and J. Byron Sudbury

PART TWO: TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVES

Chapter 6. Technology and Typology of the Calf Creek Horizon, by Sergio J. Ayala

Chapter 7. Calf Creek Cave and the Calf Creek Point Type, by Don R. Dickson

Chapter 8. Andice: An Early Archaic Dart Point Type, by Elton R. Prewitt

Chapter 9. Bell: A Calf Creek Series Dart Point Type in Texas, by Elton R. Prewitt

Chapter 10. Preforming in the Calf Creek Horizon, by Sergio J. Ayala

Chapter 11. Low-Magnification Examination of Experimentally Heated Frisco Chert
Flakes: Light Microscopy versus Scanning Electron Microscopy
by Richard Lupia, Don G. Wyckoff, and Paul Benefield

Chapter 12. Replicating Calf Creek Lithic Technology: Heat Treatment of Favored
Lithic Materials, by Paul Benefield and Marjorie Duncan

PART THREE: REGIONAL RECORDS

Chapter 13. Calf Creek on the Eastern Horizon

by Jack H. Ray and Neal H. Lopinot

Chapter 14. Summary and Perspectives on Calf Creek in Kansas

by Michael D. Stites

Chapter 15. The Calf Creek Horizon in Kansas and Adjacent Oklahoma

by Marjorie Duncan

Chapter 16. Calf Creek Materials from the Interior Highlands

by Don G. Wyckoff, with contributions from Doug Barton, Doug Barton Jr., Aiden Barton, Paul Benefield, Bobby Cross, Marjorie Duncan, Vera McKellips, Mel Phillips, Billy Ross, Christian Ross, Towana Spivey, and Kevin Young

Chapter 17. Calf Creek Hunter-Gatherers in the Southern Ozarks: Mid-Holocene Deposits at Hudson East (3BE714) and Hudson West (3BE906) in Northwest Arkansas

by Pritam Chowdhury, Chris Branam, and Eric Mills

Chapter 18. The Distribution of Calf Creek Series Sites and Points in East Texas

by Timothy K. Perttula

Chapter 19. Calf Creek Manifestations on the Southern High Plains Region and Their Margins, by Don G. Wyckoff and Scott D. Brosowske, with contributions from Lance Bussard, Guy Gross, George Jackson, Kimmie Karber, Alvie Laverty, Imogene LeVick, Bill Macormic, Richard Rose, Choise Smith, and Phil Terrell

Chapter 20. The Stinnett Swimming Pool Site: A Middle Archaic Bison Find in Hutchinson County, Texas (41HC220), by Veronica M. Arias and Rolla H. Shaller

Chapter 21. Calf Creek in West Central Oklahoma

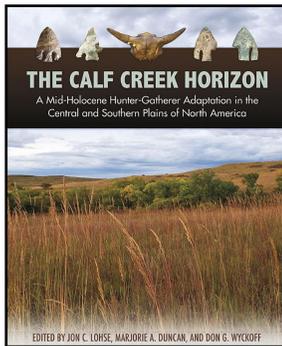
by Marjorie Duncan, James Matthew Oliver, and Debra Green

Chapter 22. Staging Areas, Camps, and Things Lost Along the Way: Calf Creek Manifestations in Central and Southern Oklahoma, by Don G. Wyckoff, Robert Bartlett, Jim Cox, and Towana Spivey, with contributions from Roger Hamilton and Brad Sanders

References

Contributors

Index



The Calf Creek Horizon: A Mid-Holocene Hunter-Gatherer Adaptation in the Central and Southern Plains of North America

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Reviewed by Metin I. Eren, Department of Anthropology, Kent State University, Kent, OH

The first time a reader picks up Lohse et alia's *The Calf Creek Horizon* (*CCH*), s/he will be awestruck. Only a few times in my career have I come across a tome with as much care and production value as *CCH*. This 600+ page monster possesses hundreds of full color, glossy figures, images, and maps; thick, heavy pages; oodles of data tables and appendices; and 22 chapters detailing many aspects of the mid-Holocene's Calf Creek archaeological culture on the North American Central and Southern Plains. Indeed, even small details—like black backgrounds for lithic artifacts—must have come at no small printing cost, but substantially enhance the reader experience. The blood, sweat, and tears the editors must have put into this tome is palpable, and that they pulled it off is a career-level achievement.

The focus, and strength, of *CCH* is data presentation and description. *CCH* is divided into three sections, "Environmental and Temporal Contexts," "Technical Perspectives," and "Regional Records." Lithics, faunal remains, phytoliths, site stratigraphy, site location, isotopes, radiocarbon dates, and more are all made available to the reader. And that avocational archaeologists, collectors, and citizen scientists played no small part in this endeavor should be celebrated. Between the chapter titles and the comprehensive index any data a reader is looking for are easily accessed. Also sprinkled throughout many chapters are nuggets of history regarding important sites, excavations, and people who have contributed ideas toward understanding the Calf Creek culture.

I was not always convinced by particular arguments throughout the volume. For example, the notion that Calf Creek was some sort of "cultural revitalization movement" did not make a lot of sense to me, nor was it well supported. Nor was I convinced that a "short chronology" of the Calf Creek culture is necessarily correct or should be adopted by researchers. And, despite the large quantity of lithic data, proportionally there was little in the way of true lithic analysis (*sensu* Clarke 1968; Lycett and Chauhan 2010). But save for a few chapters, I do not get the sense that any of the editors or authors were wed to any pet hypothesis because, to reiterate, the purpose of this volume is the details, description, and data, not analysis or synthesis. Indeed, the editors put an exclamation point on this emphasis by excluding a final "summary" or "discussant" chapter. Upon reflection, I think such an exclusion works quite well, and is an approach other editors might consider adopting.

CCH is a volume that hunter-gatherer archaeologists around the world should have on their bookshelf. I would not be the least surprised if a florescence of Calf Creek studies occurs over the next several years—Lohse et alia have provided the spark, the data, and the questions to be tested. For their monumental accomplishment, the *CCH* editors and contributors are to be congratulated.

References

Clarke, David L. (1968) *Analytical Archaeology*. Meuthen, London.

Lycett, Stephen J., and Parth R. Chauhan (2010) Analytical Approaches to Palaeolithic Technologies: An Introduction. In *New Perspectives on Old Stones: Analytical Approaches to Paleolithic Technologies*, edited by Stephen Lycett and Parth Chauhan, pp. 1–22. Springer, New York.