

## FEATURE DESCRIPTIONS: PART 7. FEATURES SOUTHEAST OF INTERSTATE 10 AND CONGRESS STREET

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Archaeological work conducted during the Rio Nuevo Archaeology project resulted in the discovery of hundreds of features—areas in which human activities took place. Descriptions of excavated features and summarized data on unexcavated features are presented in this chapter. Descriptions of human burials found during the project are provided in Chapter 18 (this volume).

Work during this project was conducted at four different archaeological sites. The San Agustín Mission, Mission Gardens, Brickyard, and Congress Street loci were located at the Clearwater site, AZ BB:13:6 (ASM), on the western side of the Santa Cruz River. AZ BB:13:481 (ASM) were the Prehistoric, Protohistoric, and Historic era canals, ditches, and a spillway, also located on the western side of the Santa Cruz River. The Tucson Presidio has been designated AZ BB:13:13 (ASM), and the site includes both prehistoric- and historic-era features. Finally, a portion of a historic-era residential block on the northern side of Clark Street and east of the Interstate 10 (I-10) frontage road was designated AZ BB:13:735 (ASM).

The feature descriptions in this chapter are grouped by locus, except for canals, which are described in Part 6 and which are grouped by time period. All site numbers in this chapter are Arizona State Museum (ASM) numbers. Radiocarbon dates are reported in both uncalibrated radiocarbon years before present (b.p.), and in calibrated calendar years at the 1-sigma range of probability. Excavated and unexcavated features are listed, by site/locus and time period, in Table 4.1 (see Part 1 of this chapter).

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### INTRODUCTION

In November of 2000 and May of 2001, archaeological testing was conducted at a parcel of property adjacent to the westbound frontage road of Interstate 10 (I-10) (Figure 4.123). The property was bounded by Congress Street on the north and Clark Street on the south. Testing consisted of the mechanical excavation of 27 trenches both within the property and along its boundaries. Eight cultural features were discovered during testing; all features were recorded and drawn, and diagnostic artifacts were collected.

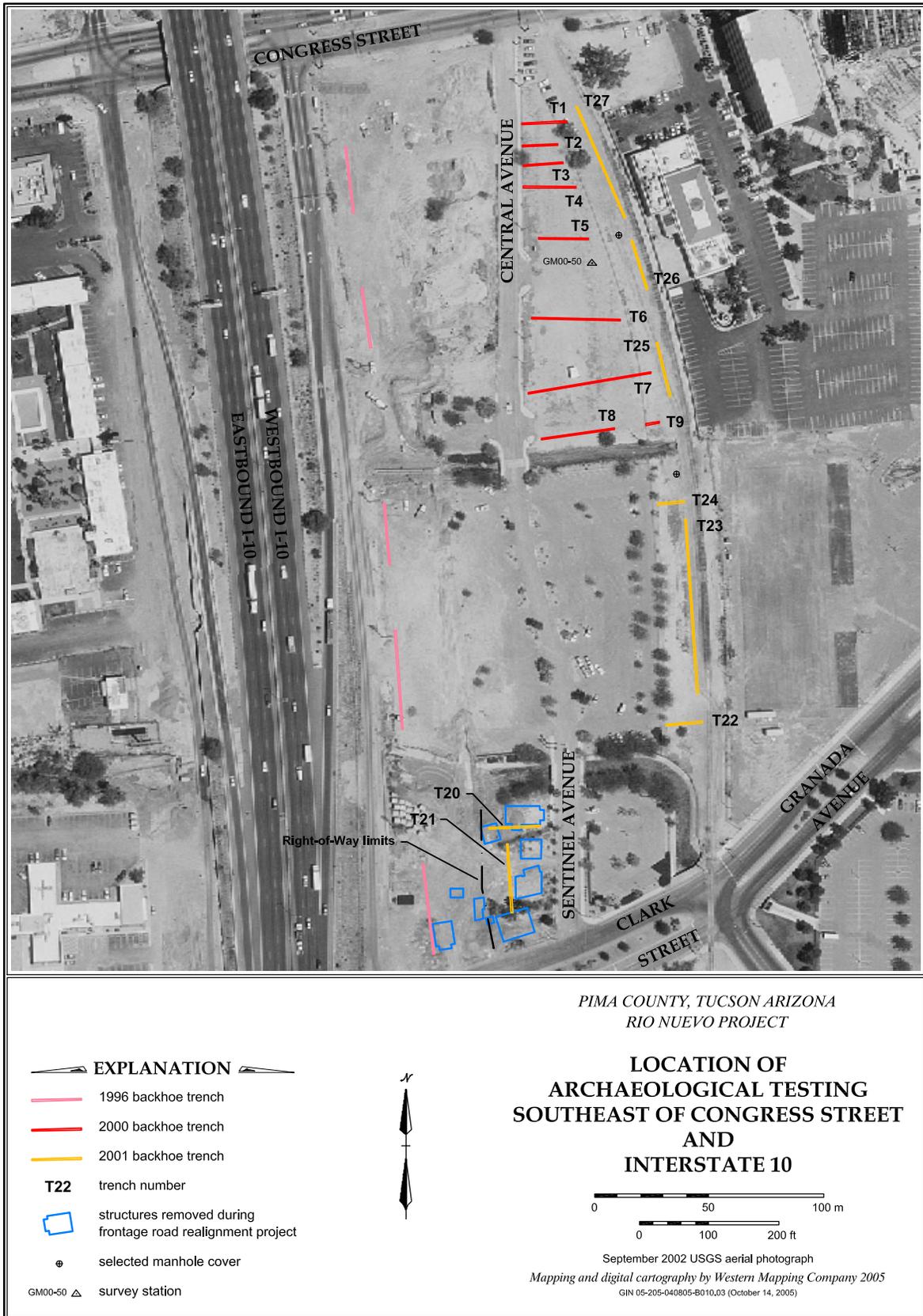
#### AZ BB:13:NW (ASM)

Two areas of trash were found on the former Pioneer Paint parcel, located immediately south of Congress Street and west of the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad tracks. These features were not assigned to a site.

### Feature 1, Trash-filled Depression

This feature was a depression filled with historic trash in both walls of Trench 8. The depression was drawn in the southern wall of the trench, and over 100 artifacts were visible in the drawn face. The depression measured 9.3 m in width on the southern face and 9.7 m in length on the northern face. Fill of the depression began 74 cm below the modern ground surface and was overlain by a 50-cm-thick stratum of modern fill above a 24-cm-thick layer of mottled gray-brown silty clay.

The upper 16 cm of fill contained broken dishes, glass, ash, and charcoal. All the dishes appeared to be from Southern Pacific Railroad dining cars. The glass included pieces of tumblers, alcohol bottles, and food bottles. Below this layer of trash was a 14-cm-thick stratum of light gray silty clay with rusty metal, brick fragments, and charcoal. Pieces of historic ceramics and glass were collected from the fill. The feature probably represents a natural depression that was filled with trash after 1924, the year in which



**Figure 4.123.** Locations of trenches excavated southeast of Congress Street and Interstate 10 at AZ BB:13:NW (ASM) and AZ BB:13:735 (ASM).

the Southern Pacific Railroad acquired the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad.

### **Feature 2, Trash Midden**

Feature 2 was a historic trash midden deposited in a large shallow depression. The midden was discovered in backhoe Trench 8 and was visible in both walls of the trench. The exposed feature measured 17.25 m in length in the northern wall and 18.20 m in length in the southern wall of Trench 8. Fill of the depression began approximately 42 cm below the modern ground surface. The pit fill consisted of layers of ash, charcoal, burned coal, and pieces of architectural stone. Over 100 artifacts were visible within one exposed cross section of the feature. Artifacts noted in the fill included buttons, historic ceramics, and numerous glass bottles, including a Coca-Cola® bottle dated to 1929. The feature extended roughly 95 cm below the modern ground surface. Due to soil contamination from petroleum-based chemicals, this feature could not be drawn.

### **AZ BB:13:735 (ASM)**

Features discovered during archaeological testing on the northern side of Clarke Street were assigned a new Arizona State Museum (ASM) site number AZ BB:13:735 (ASM) (see Figure 4.123). All the features are associated with residences constructed on the block in the 1940s to 1950s .

### **Feature 3, Roasting Pit**

This historic roasting pit was discovered in the eastern wall of Trench 21 approximately 26 cm below the modern ground surface. The pit measured 64 cm in length and 71 cm in depth. The upper 57 cm of pit fill consisted of mottled lumps of sand, silt, and clay. The lower 14 cm of fill was a lens of almost pure ash and charcoal. The margins of the pit appeared reddish-brown from oxidization, suggesting this feature was used as a cooking pit or firepit. The similarity of the upper pit fill to the matrix into which this feature was constructed implied the feature was filled with the soil originally excavated from it soon after the pit was used. No artifacts were visible in the exposed profile of the pit.

### **Feature 4, Trash Pit**

This historic trash pit was visible in both walls of the northern end of backhoe Trench 21. The northern

end of the pit extended out of the trench to the north. The visible portion of the feature measured 3.2 m in length in the drawn (western) wall of the trench, and 2.3 m in the opposite wall. Fill of the feature began about 20 cm below the modern ground surface and extended below the excavated base of the trench (1.2 m in depth) at the northern end of the trench. The depth of the fill suggested this pit may also have been used as an outhouse pit.

The fill was heavily disturbed by a modern sewer pipe trench and a modern pit sometime before the overlying parking lot was constructed. The sewer pipe was visible in both walls of the backhoe trench, while the modern pit was visible only in the western wall. The modern pit had a plastic bag visible within its fill.

The uppermost layer of fill in the historic pit was composed of several lenses of white ash and charcoal. Filling the remainder of the pit was trash, including numerous glass bottles, pieces of rusted metal, and cooked animal bones. This undisturbed trash appeared historic in age. This fill continued down below the base of trench.

While the northern end of the feature continued below the base of the trench, a small, shallower lobe of the pit was present at the southern end of the feature. Although the fill in both the shallower and deeper areas of the pit was identical, the margins of the shallower lobe were slightly oxidized from burning. This area may represent a dump of burning materials, or use of this end of the pit as a cooking or firepit.

### **Feature 5, Water Trough**

This historic water trough was discovered approximately 12 cm below the modern ground surface in the western face of Trench 21. The feature consisted of a basin of poured concrete whose edges were topped with a single course of brick. A few additional bricks were visible extending slightly south of the feature, and may have represented a constructed surface. Including the bricks, the feature was 1.2 m wide at the top. The concrete basin itself had sloping walls, and measured 42 cm in width at the top and 28 cm in width at the base. Total feature depth was 0.32 m; a 9-cm-thick orange brick topped a concrete basin 23 cm deep.

The fill of the basin consisted of concrete rubble and debris from the demolition of nearby structures. No artifacts were visible in the fill. A small metal drainpipe was visible at the base of the concrete basin; the pipe is the only portion of the feature visible in the opposite (eastern) wall of the trench. The exact function of this feature is unknown, but it seems likely it was designed to hold water. It may have been

used as a trough, a fountain, or possibly a drain for a small outbuilding.

#### **Feature 6, Posthole**

This historic posthole was discovered about 34 cm below the modern ground surface in the western wall of Trench 21. The posthole was not visible in the eastern wall of the trench. The posthole pit was difficult to define, although a large piece of termite-eaten post was visible within it. The post was standing vertically in the hole, and measured 13 cm in width and 52 cm in length. Roughly 6 cm of fill was present between the base of the post and the base of the hole. The function of the post was unknown.

#### **Feature 7, House Foundation**

Portions of this historic rock and mortar house foundation were visible in the compacted dirt and gravel surface of the parking lot. The remaining portions of the foundation were hand-excavated and cleared of soil. In some places, the modern parking lot fill was as much as 5 cm deep above the foundation. The foundation formed a rough square 8.5 m in long and 7.8 m wide. A portion of the foundation split the large square into two smaller rectangles along its long (north-south) axis.

The foundation was composed of large (10-30 cm in diameter) rocks within a white mortar matrix. The foundation measured 30 cm in width and stood as much as 10 cm in height in some places. A 40-cm-wide opening in the western wall of the foundation near the northwestern corner may have represented an entrance to the structure. A small pipe embedded in the wall some 1.7 m south of this opening was the only possible evidence for any kind of utilities in the structure.

A poured concrete surface measuring 3.5 m in length and 3.0 m in width was discovered in the southwestern corner of the structure. The foundation walls were best preserved in this area. No other evidence for floors except a hard-packed earthen surface was found within the foundation.

The fill within the foundation was primarily compacted sandy silt and red gravels, representing modern fill added during construction of the parking lot. Some areas had a thin layer of loose gravel beneath the more compacted modern layer. These gravels lay atop a very compact brown clay surface that may have functioned as the floor of the structure. Some

artifacts were noted in the loose gravel fill, but were not collected. These included six multicolored glass marbles, a small metal chain, several fragments of possible window glass, a butter knife blade, a pocket knife blade, and a few fragments of saw-cut cow bone. A small pile of bricks was also found in the southeastern corner of the foundation. This foundation was thought to be pre-1950 in age.

#### **Feature 8, House Foundation**

This concrete house foundation was revealed during excavation of Trench 21. The southern end of the trench clipped the northwestern corner of the foundation. Mechanical stripping then exposed a 6.5-m-long section of the western wall, as well as the northeastern corner of the foundation. The foundation was composed of whitish concrete with angular gravel inclusions. Intact portions were approximately 20 cm high and 55 cm wide. In some areas, fragments of crushed brick were visible at the top of the foundation. The walls of this structure may have been brick, but except for these fragments, nothing had been preserved.

A modern utility trench damaged a small portion of the foundation about 6 m along the western wall from the northwestern corner. Although a good amount of fill covered the foundation in some areas, most of it appeared modern. No diagnostic artifacts were discovered or collected. The foundation appeared to have been constructed more recently than Feature 7, another foundation to the northeast.

### **SUMMARY**

Archaeological testing at two locations between Congress Street and Clark Street east of the westbound I-10 frontage road resulted in the discovery of eight cultural features. Six features were associated with homes located immediately north of Clark Street and dated to the 1940s on. Two other features represented depressions filled with trash, some of which may have been related to the nearby El Paso & Southwestern (later South Pacific) Railroad depot. Unfortunately, the more interesting of these features was contaminated by hydrocarbons and could not be examined.

The presence of paved parking lots in the area prevented more extensive archaeological testing. The area will be further studied prior to the planned construction of museums and a civic plaza in the area.