

W. Geigin Curwase

Delaware Archaeological Board *88*

THE ARCHEOLOG

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The News Letter of the Sussex Archeological Assoc.

Lewes, Delaware

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ARCHEOLOG

Sept. 15, 1948

"THE ARCHEOLOG"

You will note that this, our second issue of the News Letter of the Sussex Archaeological Association, is dignified by the name "Archeolog". We have been trying, with the many suggestions of our members, to give to this publication a name. The many titles submitted, such as "The Arrow", "The Digger", "The Sherd", etc., were very fine but did not have that something that we wanted for a title. Then out of a clear sky arrived a letter from Mr. Orville H. Peets in which he suggested "The Archeolog" as a fitting name for our paper. He coined this word by combining the first two syllables of the word "archeology" with the word "log", which is the complete record of a ship and the events of a voyage. When this suggestion was presented to the Association, it was adopted unanimously. We wish to thank Mr. Peets, and we hope that the material contained in this issue and future issues will be worthy of such a fine title.

NEW MEMBERS

Our last issue saw us with forty-two members. Since that time we have acquired twenty-two new members, making our present grand total sixty-four. We wish to welcome these new members to our Association and are pleased to publish their names in this issue of the ARCHEOLOG:

43.	Martin Berdit	University of Pennsylvania
44.	Ethelyn Burns	Rehoboth, Del.
45.	Frederick H. Butcher	Rehoboth, Del.
46.	W. S. Corkran	Rehoboth, Del.
47.	Edmund S. Carpenter	University of Toronto, Canada
48.	Mrs. Cecil C. Fulton	Dover, Del.
49.	David B. Greene	Milford, Del.
50.	Mrs. J. Robe Green	Baltimore, Md.
51.	Jacob Gruber	Temple University
52.	Jack R. Lawton	Lewes, Del.
53.	Wm. Lynch	Lewes, Del.
54.	Henry Michael	University of Pennsylvania
55.	Wm. N. McCauley	Georgetown, Del.
56.	Horace S. Okie	Georgetown, Del.
57.	John T. Purnell	Georgetown, Del.
58.	Howard Sammons	Georgetown, Del.
59.	Andrew W. Van Sant	Dover, Del.
60.	Molloy C. Vaughn	Lewes, Del.
61.	Mrs. Molloy C. Vaughn	Lewes, Del.
62.	Stephen C. Vaughn	Lewes, Del.
63.	Wm. B. Vaughn	Lewes, Del.
64.	J. Franklin Yeager	Silver Springs, Md.

REPORT OF EXHIBIT COMMITTEE
KENT AND SUSSEX COUNT FAIR

The exhibit of artifacts from the Townsend site, placed in the State Board of Education Building at the Harrington Fair, was considered successful. It consisted of seven restored pottery vessels and a collection of bone, antler, and stone implements. These were placed in a locked show case which was loaned to the SAA by the senior class of the Lewes High School.

A restoration of a "bundle" burial was prepared and exhibited in a case made by Roger Vandegrift. Another year, learning from experience, the Committee, if it wishes to display a burial, should provide a cover for the case. Visitors plucked most of the Indian's teeth for souvenirs. This particular exhibit attracted a great deal of attention.

A large sign, identifying the display as belonging to the Sussex Archaeological Association, was painted on celotex by our member, Mr. Orville Peets, and was tacked to the sloping beams over the exhibit.

A series of enlargements of five pictures of activities and recoveries at the site was tacked to the wall behind and above the show cases and received much favorable comment for their excellence. The Association is fortunate in numbering among its members, our good and devoted photographer, Fred Butcher. Both the original prints and the enlargements were his work. They added greatly to the effectiveness of the exhibit and expressed some of the vitality of the dig.

Appreciation is due members W. S. Ingram, Jr., Ralph and Mrs. Karl, Roger Vandegrift, Adele Chambers, and Ken Givan for serving as counselors and guides. Each was responsible for one day's service.

The Association is also indebted to Otto Zacharias for the use of his truck for taking material and cases to Harrington before the Fair and hauling it back to Lewes afterwards and to the State Board of Education for the use of the allotted space in its building. Appreciation is also due officials of the Kent and Sussex County Fair Association for their generosity in the matter of passes for both people and automobiles.

Committee on Fair Exhibit

Orville Peets
Roger Vandegrift
Geiger Omwake, Chairman

PROGRESS REPORT OF ACTIVITIES BEING CARRIED
FORWARD AT THE TOWNSEND SITE

Work of further investigating the Indian village known as the Townsend site has progressed steadily since the last meeting of the Association in accordance with the plan which was given approval at that time and which subsequently received the approval of Dr. Stewart, advisor for the dig.

To date a total of 68 refuse pits have been located and have been or are being investigated. These have yielded to date 29 burials of which 18 have been of the bundle or nested type, the balance being flexed. All skeletal remains have been transmitted to the U. S. National Museum for restoration and study by Dr. Stewart and his assistant, Dr. Marshall Newman, and their technicians. Along with human skeletal material has been sent the remains of about a dozen Indian dogs, samples of the shell deposit in each of the 68 pits, and a great quantity of animal and fish bone refuse from the site.

Official photographer Fred Butcher has taken about 200 pictures of the dig. These are in addition to the pictures taken by individual investigators and the photographic record of the dig is rather complete.

Investigation of the areas which are free of refuse pits has begun. Fifty foot blocks of the site have been assigned to members of the Association. Those of the Purnells, Van Sant and Omwake have been sampled. Definite post moulds were first discovered by Van Sant. The area adjoining the original square has been enlarged and the moulds discovered indicate some type of oval structure.

The area surrounding pit #19 in which at least three burials damaged by the plows were located is under investigation. Two large post moulds have been located to the southwest of the burials. On the northeast side the remains of a house site have been located, indicated by post moulds and discolored earth within the area they enclose. At a depth of 12" in the disturbed earth, a small pottery vessel was recovered by Franklin Yeager, a most careful and interested workman.

The Committee wishes to commend those members who have been digging for the care with which they have worked. It is felt that only a minimum amount of material and information has been overlooked.

The assistance of Mr. Edmund S. Carpenter and his companions from the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University is recognized. Helpful suggestions for improving techniques, keeping records, and interpreting recoveries have been received from them. Nearly all the material which has been recovered at the Townsend site has been photographed to show detail. Copies of all prints are to be given to the Association. Mr. Carpenter has directed the survey of the site and a complete master map of the site, showing all contours and features of the site, is in progress of making. Mr. Carpenter will prepare the ceramic report.

FOR THE RECORD

By
H. Geiger Omwake

In the spring of 1931, in the course of grading the playground of the Lewes School by horse-drawn scoop to provide for tennis courts, there was unearthed a single human burial. The fact that the remains were scooped out along with a quantity of oyster and clam shells suggested that the skeleton was that of an Indian. Although the skull was badly mutilated by the scoop, one of the teachers at the school, Mr. Irvin Kepner, salvaged what remained of the fragments and sent them to the writer who was able to fit together enough of the pieces to reconstruct a goodly portion of the skull. In the spring of 1948 this partial skull was forwarded to the United States National Museum for possible identification and measurement.

In the fall of 1947 the writer became associated with the Lewes School. Remembering the finding of the skull fragments he, in company with Mr. James A. Moore, also associated with the school, made a censory examination of the playground and the adjacent fields. In one of them, not far from the reported area of the burial, a refuse pit was located. Moore excavated and found it to be a small pit, three feet in diameter, three feet in depth, and having a conical shape. Contents were only three small body fragments of paddle-marked pottery. Shell refuse consisted of about equal parts of clams and oysters. There was nothing unusual or distinctive about the pit.

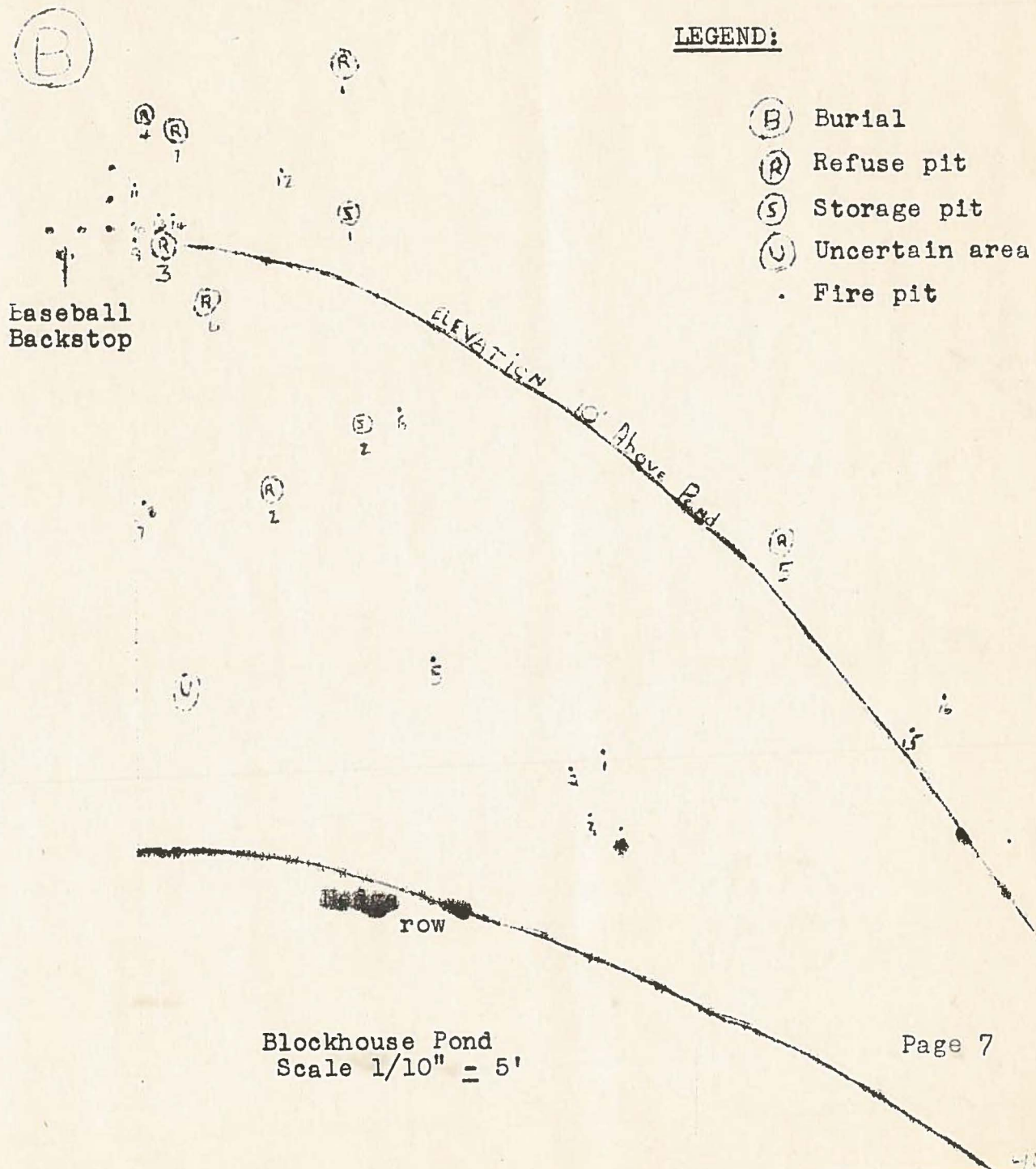
During August 1948 further grading operations were undertaken on the school playground which had been enlarged through the purchase of the field in which had been located the shell refuse pit described above. Grading was accomplished by tractor-drawn scoop and was of such a nature that removal of all topsoil was required before the subsoil was disturbed. The writer and Moore kept careful check to discover what evidences of Indian occupation might be revealed by removal of the topsoil.

The accompanying sketch tells the story. The location of the burial is given as approximate from verbal accounts of eye-witnesses. Other features have been plotted to show their actual location.

Most interesting were the shell refuse pits of which six more were located.

Two of these, R2 and R3, contained an unusual greasy earth. Both held comparatively small shell deposits of oysters and clams. R2 had a few small conch shells and R3 a number of very large ones. R2 contained a large quantity of badly burned fragments of bone, most of which came from the legs of small birds. Deer was represented as well as box turtle. R3 contained no bone refuse. Both pits gave heavy evidence of the presence of fire. The earth was replete with particles of charcoal and burned pulverized shell. Both contained a few fragments of pottery, some incised, which are shown in the accompanying sketches.

Lewes High School Football
field Site
Lewes, Delaware



Both R2 and R3 were slightly oval in shape. R2 had an approximate diameter of 40" and a depth of 36" from the surface of the ground. The top soil depth was 9". R3 was 24" in diameter and 25" in depth. Both were cylindrically shaped, vertically, and had slightly rounded bottoms. The earth immediately surrounding both pits was stained.


R4 was somewhat different. It was almost perfectly round, two feet in diameter, and tapered conically to a depth of two feet. There was no evidence whatsoever of fire. Refuse consisted of a tightly packed compact mass of oyster and clam shells. The majority of all clam shells were broken. There was no black greasy earth, no bone refuse, and only three small fragments of blanched turtle shell. The oyster and clam shells were marked by an unusual whiteness of color.

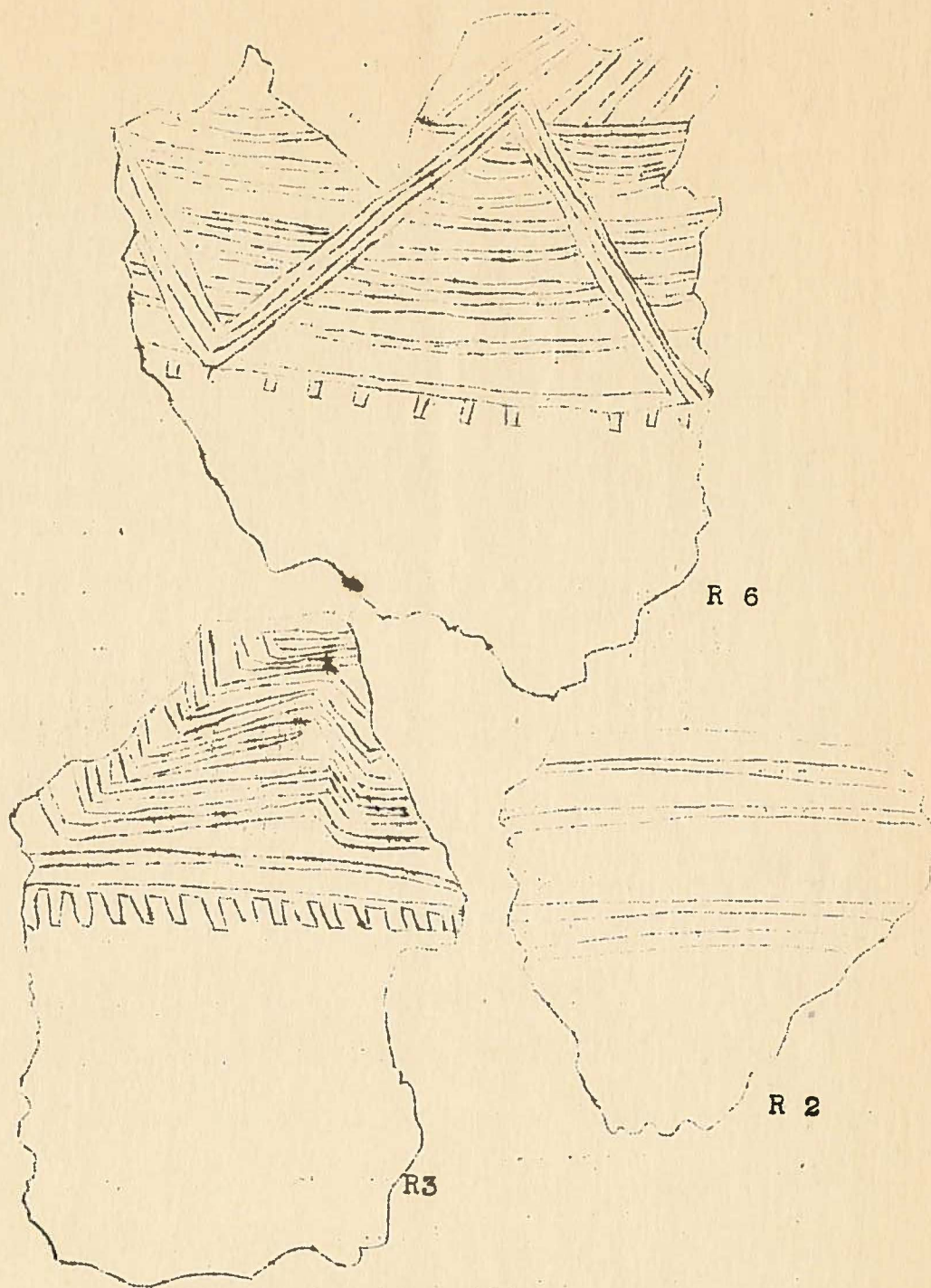
There is some question in the mind of the writer whether the pit designated as R5 ought to be called a refuse pit or a fire pit. It was much larger than other fire pits yet it contained an abundance of fragments of charred wood, two pieces of fire-cracked stone, and held a layer of clay which was burned to a reddish brown color. At the bottom of the pit was a layer of oyster shell refuse and elsewhere in the upper levels of disturbed earth were several fragments of paddle-marked pottery. For these latter reasons it has been designated a refuse pit.

R5 was oval in shape, having a long diameter of five feet and a short diameter of 40". Its depth was three feet from the top of the ground with top soil measuring six inches at the location of this pit. The bottom was flat and was of white sand. Resting on the sand was a 2" layer of oyster shells. Above them was a deposit of black greasy earth containing much charcoal. Immediately above this blackened earth was a 4" layer of burned clay of reddish brown color. The balance of the pit contained disturbed earth and many fragments of charred wood. Three paddle-marked pottery fragments from which the shell tempering material had leached out occurred in the disturbed earth at random depths and was in such poor condition that it crumbled to the touch.

R6, 30" in diameter and 42" deep, had vertical sides and a slightly rounded bottom. It contained a large quantity of burned and broken oyster, clam, and mussel shells which rested on a layer of black earth ten inches thick at the bottom of the pit. There was no bone refuse. Pottery consisted of large fragments of two vessels and single sherds of three others.

R7, slightly oval in shape, had a diameter of six feet and a depth of two feet. It contained a large quantity of oyster and clam shells, several conchs, and many charcoal particles. There were several fire-cracked stones, but no pottery.

The area shown as  on the map was a foot deep disturbed section of the field which might have been a refuse pit. There was some fire-cracked stone, a large quantity of broken and scattered oyster and clam shells, one small pot sherd, a small quantity of bird bones and turtle shell fragments. However, mixed in with the



Pottery Fragments from Refuse
Pits on the Lewes High School
Playground

apparent aboriginal material were pieces of broken red brick and crockery of no great age. Cultivation had so mixed up the evidence that nothing certain may be said about the area.

Two areas of disturbed earth which seemed unusual were found and investigated. The first was approximately three feet in diameter and four feet in depth. The second measured 3'6" in diameter and had a depth of 4'. Depth measurements include the 9" top soil layer. No aboriginal objects and no shell refuse occurred in either disturbed area. They are presumed to represent storage holes which were filled in subsequent to use as such. There were traces of charcoal in both. These areas are designated as S1 and S2 on the accompanying map.

Seventeen small pits, presumed to have been fire pits, were found and recorded. Each of these contained a minimal quantity of clam and/or oyster shells, considerable charred wood particles, and much very black earth. In the second was found a crudely chipped, drilled-shaped, stemmed point of brown pebble jasper. These small pits varied in diameter from approximately one foot to slightly more than two and all had rounded bottoms. Maximum depth into the subsoil was six inches. These small pits appear on the map under the designation F.

In addition to the features noted above, frequent small, round areas of disturbed earth containing many particles of charcoal were observed but not recorded. Investigation revealed nothing but shallow deposits of blackened earth, each about 6 inches in diameter. They were not fire pits, nor did they resemble post moulds or tree stumps. There was no pattern of distribution which might have suggested structures.

Pottery recovered from R2 and R3 and R6 is represented in the accompanying sketches. There was an insufficient quantity in any pit to permit restoration. Patterns of incised line decoration follow closely those being found currently at the nearby Townsend Site.

In conclusion it must be pointed out that this report is intended merely to record the passing of a small aboriginal site. Too frequently the progress of modern civilization has obliterated all evidence of pre-historic occupation without so much as a brief notation.

A word should be added in regard to excavation by tractor-drawn scoop. Modern earth-moving machines can be regulated almost to the half inch. It was observed that the scoop made a clean cut, leaving well exposed on the top of the subsoil all the evidences of aboriginal occupation. Two of the refuse pits, R4 and R6, were damaged in the process, their upper layer having been sheared off. This was partly due to the fact that no blackened earth was contained in the upper part of the pits and their presence was not evident until the upper layer of the subsoil was peeled off. Otherwise all the pits, refuse, storage, and fire, presented a cleanly outlined appearance. The neat job of soil removal done by the scoop suggests that this method might be tried to advantage on other archaeological sites where the top soil is not likely to contain evidence of importance.

Finally, the meagre evidence recovered from the seven relatively small refuse pits bears striking resemblance to the materials currently being recovered from the well-known Townsend Site. The Lewes School yard site is presumed, therefore, merely to represent an extension of the cultural pattern revealed there.