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DELAWARE

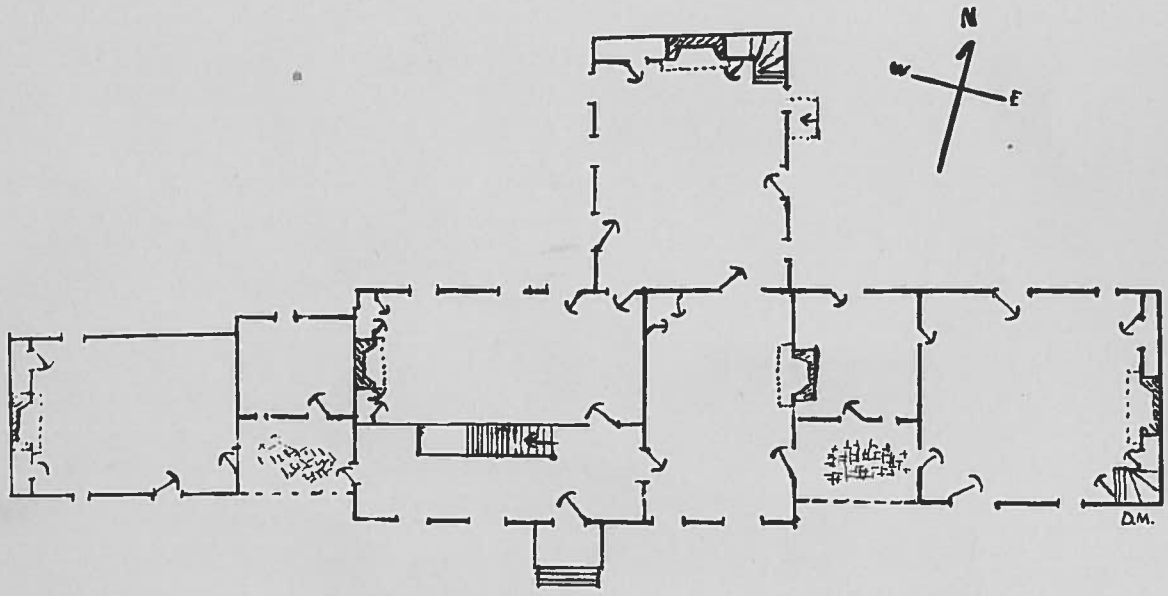

Fig. 1

Scale: 1/10"=1'

1 inch in tenths

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THE PARSON THORNE MANSION - ITS OWNERS AND OCCUPANTS*

M. Catherine Downing

The Parson Thorne Mansion, located on Silver Hill in Milford, Delaware, is a colonial brick house whose beginnings go back to 1730-1735. Built for the dwelling house on a large plantation, it retains even today this character in its setting. The house is placed well back from the street with spacious lawn shaded by ancient elm trees and surrounded on two sides by farm lands. On the other side, the hill slopes gently to a little stream called Mullet Run.

House Itself (See Figs. 1 (Cover) and 2).-

The style of architecture is typical of the southern plantation house, with a central section flanked by curtain wings. On entering the central front door of the house, we come first to a stair hall with original stairway running from first floor to attic. Behind this hall is the parlor where we find lovely panelling, corner cupboards with butterfly shelves, mouldings and trim, all original. In the fireplace is a rare fireback cast by a Sussex County foundry before the American Revolution. To the right of the hallway is the dining room. In this room is a corner cupboard of shell design with butterfly shelves, all intact. The original mantel graces the fireplace. On the second floor are three large bedrooms, each with its fireplace.

The one and a half story rooms at each end of the main house appear to have served important purposes, one as the plantation office and the other as a kitchen. Connecting these wings to the main house are arcades, behind each of which is a storeroom. An odd feature is that there is no indoor communication between these wings and the main house. The west wing, with its panelling and chair rail, gives the appearance of having been the plantation office while the east wing with its enormous fireplace and smoked ceiling indicates that it once served as kitchen for the household.

History.-

The ground where the Parson Thorne Mansion stands is part of a tract of 1750 acres called Saw Mill Range. This land was a Duke of York Grant warranted by the court at Deale (present day Lewes) on March 28, 1680 to Henry Bowman.[1] According to the terms of this grant, the grantee agreed to operate a sawmill on Mispillion

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*Presented at the November 18, 1965 meeting of the Sussex Society of Archeology and History.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 2. View of Thorne Mansion in 1961 before restoration was begun.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 3. View of Thorne Mansion in 1965 after restoration was begun.

Creek. Neither record nor ruin exists to give us the exact location of this sawmill.

The tract of land passed in its entirety to Henry Bowman's son John and from him to his son John, Jr. In these transactions there is no mention of a house and no increase in value which would indicate the addition of any building. In 1730 Joseph Booth bought from John Bowman, Jr., 510 acres of the Saw Mill Range tract.[2] It was he who built the rear wing, and perhaps the east wing. This rear wing, built between 1730 and 1735, is of frame construction with brick nogging inside the plastered walls.

It was Joseph Booth who built the dam across the river at the same location where Thorne built a dam later (the present peninsulas which divide Silver Lake into two parts). All that is known of this dam is the reference to it in the act of the General Assembly that authorized Thorne to build his dam. This act states "so erect or cause to be erected a Mill Dam, at the place where a certain Joseph Booth formerly made a Dam, running from the Fast-Land on the Sussex side of Mispillion Creek aforesaid and crossing the said Creek to a long Point of High-Land . . ."[3]

In November of 1745 the court ordered the Sheriff to sell the lands of Joseph Booth, deceased (he had died in 1735 heavily in debt), in satisfaction of a mortgage of £120 given to the General Loan Office of Kent County by his son Joseph Booth, Jr. At this sale in 1746, John Cullen purchased 263 acres for £72 and was given a sheriff's deed dated August 15, 1746, describing it as, "that parcel of land on which Joseph Booth, Sr., did dwell."[4] By this statement we infer that Booth built a house, and this inference is supported by the fact that a little more than half the land which brought £22 fifteen years earlier now brought £72.

John Cullen was no newcomer to the Milford area, his ancestor George Cullen having received a grant of land in 1680 on Mispillion Creek. The Cullens were large land owners and successful in their business at the little settlement of Cullen Town which was named for them. This was located west of Milford in the area of the intersection of the Harrington Road and the Williamsville Road. Deeds of the early 18th century mention a "landing road" leading from the north to a point just below where Kings Highway crossed the Mispillion. When the water is low in Haven Lake the old Kings Highway roadway can be seen about one hundred yards west of the present highway. At the time that this settlement was flourishing, there were a store, or trading post, and a ship's landing.

The building of Booth's dam was a threat to the thriving business at Cullen Town because it would end shipping upstream. By the purchase of Booth's Silver Hill property, John Cullen not only acquired an enviable plantation site, but also, at the same time ended the threat to Cullen Town presented by Booth's dam. Using the dwelling of Joseph Booth as a rear wing, he added the original of what is the front section and the two wings. On February 26, 1773 John Cullen divided his Silver Hill property into three parts, the part on which his "mansion house" was located passing to his son Jonathan. Negotiations indicate that this "mansion house" was built about 1750. Jonathan deeded his share, including the house,

to his brother George.

On February 9, 1785 George Cullen entered into a bond to deed to Sydenham Thorne both his portion of his father's estate and also Jonathan's portion with the mansion house. He died before he could execute the deed but his executor gave Thorne a deed on August 16, 1787.

Owners and Occupants.-

The first occupant of the house whom we have knowledge other than only what has been gleaned from legal transactions is the Reverend Mr. Sydenham Thorne, an Anglican clergyman. He arrived in the Milford area on December 24, 1774 to take charge of Christ Church, Mispillion, located at Church Hill about five miles west of the town of Milford. On August 24th of that year he had been issued at Fulham Palace in London a license to officiate in Pennsylvania[5] and in September he had been ordained.[6]

Mr. Thorne was the first resident rector of Christ Church, Mispillion. In addition to that church, he also served St. Paul's Church, now defunct, located eighteen miles west of Dover, and also preached in Dover and in Sussex County, as well as performing baptisms, marriages and conducting funeral services in those areas.[7] This was a broad territory to be covered even by today's means of transportation, to say nothing of the days of travel only on foot and by horseback. Anglican clergymen sent out by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, known familiarly as the SPG, were paid only a small stipend by that society and, of necessity, were forced to eke out a living by other means.

Sydenham Thorne solved his money problems by marrying between 1775 and 1782 a woman of means, Betty Crapper, the widow of Levin Crapper, wealthy landowner of Sussex County. The assumption is made that it was Betty Crapper's money which enabled Thorne to buy the Silver Hill property. Mrs. Thorne, with her many marriages, brings a romantic note to the story. Her first marriage of record was to Robert Polk of Dorchester County, Maryland, by whom she had one son Clement. After the early death of Robert, Betty Polk married Manuel Manlove, also of Dorchester County, Maryland, who died in 1773. By 1775 Betty Polk Manlove had married Levin Crapper, and after his death married Sydenham Thorne. She did not remain a widow after Thorne's death, but took a fifth husband, Peter Lowber, who was living at the time of her death in 1801.

Being enterprising and a man of vision, "Parson Thorne", as he was called, had ideas for the locality. He entered into an agreement with his neighbor Mr. Joseph Oliver whereby he, Thorne, would build a dam across the river at his mill if Oliver would lay out his lands into building lots. The two men carried out their agreement and the town of Milford was begun in 1787. These two men, Sydenham Thorne and Joseph Oliver, have been designated the founders of the town. It is fitting, therefore, that the house should be known by the name of its distinguished owner, a co-founder of the town of Milford.

The years of the American Revolution were difficult ones for Mr. Thorne, as they were for all Anglican clergymen in America. Having taken an oath of loyalty to the King and being required to read prayers for the Royal Family, a clergyman was hard pressed to keep out of trouble while performing his duties. While some met this exigency by closing their churches, others by defying the patriots, and still others by compromise, Thorne managed to keep his churches open by engaging an official reader who was not bound to read the proscribed prayers. He, himself, officiated at funerals, baptisms and marriages, which services required no prayers for the Royal Family. Four times he was called before the Committee of Correspondence for Kent County and four times he was dismissed.

In 1791 Thorne began the construction of Christ Church in Milford and the removal of the congregation to the new village. The change took place, but the death of Thorne at the age of 45 years delayed completion of the building. When Sydenham Thorne died on February 13, 1793, he was buried at Silver Hill near his mansion on a plot of ground later enclosed as a family burial ground.

Thorne's heir was his nephew Peter Caverly who inherited the mansion on Silver Hill and the business ventures of milling, selling and renting land, etc. In 1807 The Commercial Bank of Delaware (now The Farmers Bank of Delaware) was established in Dover and Caverly became the first cashier. Being required to live in the bank building, he, with his family, moved to Dover.

In 1811 Caverly sold the mansion, the dam, the mill, everything except a few rental properties to James Clayton of Dagsboro. He was the father of John M. Clayton, the internationally known statesman who, as Secretary of State under President Zachary Taylor negotiated the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty with Great Britain pledging the neutrality of any future canal across Central America. Here John M. Clayton spent a part of his boyhood years and attended the Milford Academy. In the walled family graveyard to the rear of the house are buried his parents and other members of his family. Several years later he bought this family burial plot from the owner of the property and set up a trust fund for its perpetual care.

Unfortunately, James Clayton over extended himself during a bad economic period and when he died in 1820 was hopelessly in debt. The mansion house farm was sold at a sheriff's sale in 1821 and was bid in by The Commercial Bank of Delaware. In 1825 the bank deeded it to Col. Benjamin Potter and his son Edmund S. Potter as tenants in common, the Colonel to have a two-thirds interest and his son a one-third interest. Later Col. Potter acquired 10 acres of the original Thorne tract which Clayton had sold and added this to the farm.

Col. Potter lived in the mansion until his death in 1843. He achieved distinction as a philanthropist and is remembered to the present day because of his unusual legacy. In his will he left twelve farms to be administered "for the support, maintainance and education of the poor white citizens of Kent County generally . . ." To make clear his intentions, he stated "I wish it to be clearly

understood that no part of my bequest shall be applied to the use or benefit of any person or persons residing within the walls of the poor house, but to be distributed amongst such only of the poor, who by timely assistance may be kept from being carried to the poor house and becoming subjects thereof . . ."[9]

At the death of Col. Potter the mansion property passed to a nephew (his son Edmund had died), also named Benjamin Potter, a boy of only eleven years. Dr. William Burton, who was Governor of the State of Delaware 1858-1862, was appointed guardian for young Benjamin Potter and lived in the mansion on Silver Hill. Governor Burton served the state during the difficult years just before and during the outbreak of the war between the states. He stood out bravely for States Rights and Constitutional government at the time of their first great challenge when it took great courage to do so.

Benjamin Potter grew up, studied medicine and became a practicing physician of Milford. Dr. Potter married Miss Mary Fiddeman, daughter of Col. Henry B. Fiddeman. Like others of his family, he died at an early age. Only thirty days before his untimely death he sold the mansion property to Col. Fiddeman.

Col. Fiddeman was a capable business man of varied interests. He was a director of the Delaware Junction and Breakwater Railroad and second president of the Milford Steamboat Company. For sixteen years he was a director of the Bank of Smyrna and its agent in Milford. From this position he resigned in 1876 and became the first president of the First National Bank of Milford (now the Milford Office of the Wilmington Trust Company).

Col. Fiddeman renovated the house in 1879, changing its appearance from Colonial to Victorian. The ridge of the roof of the main house was raised to give the roof a sharper pitch and an "A" dormer was built into the front of the roof. The walls and roofs of the two wings were raised until these roofs became continuations of the roofs of the connecting store room sections of the house and "A" dormers were added. A front porch was erected to replace the earlier stoop. In the front of the house four light windows were installed to replace the earlier small light windows. According to a pencilled message left on a board by the carpenters on the job, he "rebuilt the house frame." This rebuilding consisted of removal of the nogging wall on the east side and replacing it with lath and plaster. He also put on new weatherboarding, new cornice boards and a new roof.

At Col. Fiddeman's death in 1887 his daughter Mary, then the wife of Dr. Mark Lofland, inherited the property. At her death in 1911, she left the mansion to her son Henry Fiddeman Lofland. He died, however, the following year and the place eventually became the property of his brother, Dr. James P. Lofland, a well known and popular Milford physician known to two generations as "Dr. Jim." He and his wife made it their home for some years after their marriage.

In 1916 Dr. Lofland sold the mansion and farm to Mr. George H. Draper, Sr. The following year Mr. Draper sold the house but bought it back in 1921. He did not live in the house but ran the large farm and rented the house. No further alterations were

made - work was restricted to essential repairs. The house passed from father to son to grandson. The grandson, James Richard Draper, loved the house and thought seriously of making it his home but decided against it for practical reasons. However, wishing to see the house in good hands and lovingly cared for, he gave it in 1961 to the Milford Historical Society. On September 22, 1962, as a part of the celebration of the 175th anniversary of the founding of the town of Milford, the house was formally presented to the Society at a public ceremony held on the lawn of the house.

Restoration (See Fig. 3).-

Since accepting ownership of the property the Society has begun the work of restoration. However, most of the work has necessarily been limited to repairs. The greatest changes in appearance are those made to the front of the structure. In 1963 the Victorian porch was removed and replaced by a stoop following the lines of the original one, new windows duplicating the few original ones which remain were installed, frames and lintels repaired or replaced and all of the exterior woodwork given a coat of paint. In the rear wing, the imitation brick siding was removed and the worn weatherboarding replaced with new copied from a fragment of the original. During 1965 the Society continued its program of restoration with the installation of electricity and plumbing. Fireplaces were repaired, hearths restored and dampers installed. A doorway in the rear wall of the west wing, not a part of the original architecture, was filled in and other wall sections repaired. The next major step will be installation of heat.

The Milford Historical Society will maintain the Parson Thorne Mansion as an historic shrine and local museum as well as Society headquarters.

References and Notes

1. State Archives, Dover, Survey Book "A", Kent County, pp. 8, 9.
2. Kent County Recorder of Deeds, Book K 1, p. 33.
3. Act of General Assembly, Passed at Dover, February 3, 1787.
4. Kent County Deeds, Book N 1, p. 107.
5. Delaware was then under the jurisdiction of Pennsylvania and known as the "Three Lower Counties on the Delaware."
6. Rightmyer, N.W., "The Anglican Church in Delaware," 1947, pp. 66, 67.
7. Turner, C.H.B., "Some Records of Sussex County, Delaware."
8. Rightmyer, N.W., Ibid., pp. 169, 170.
9. State Archives, Dover, Wills A 40.
10. Thanks to Clarence B. Downing for searching the Kent County Records and Tom Draper (a relative of the donor) for the photographs.

FURTHER WORK ON A SHELL DEPOSIT IN THE WOLFE'S NECK ARCHEOLOGICAL COMPLEX (7-S-D10)

by

D. Marine, S. Bryn and R. R. Bell

This report is a continuation of the work published in 1965[1] in an attempt to answer some of the questions raised during the 1961-2 excavations.

In the first place the size of the shell deposit is much larger than previously reported - extending southeasterly on average to the 33 ft. line (Fig. 1) with two of the 7 test areas extending beyond the 35 ft. line and containing an estimated 3530 sq. ft. instead of 2780 as previously reported. We have added about 160 sq. feet to the 500 sq. ft. previously excavated.

This newly excavated area is limited to the southeastern extensions (toward the unnamed stream) of the 7 original 4' x 5' test areas centered on the 20' line (Fig. 1). These extensions have been given the same numbers as the original test areas with the addition of A or B - e.g. 6A, 6B, 7A, etc. The following is a detailed description of the 1965 excavations beginning with the southeastern edge of the 1961-2 No. 3 test area on the 22 ft. line.

Test Area No. 3A (Fig. 1).- It will be recalled that the southwestern edge of the shell deposit of this 1961-2 test area of 20 sq. ft. began to turn to the southeast just below the 20' line leaving the southwest corner with an area of 3 sq. ft. free of shell. (This was the only test area excavated in 1961-2 that was not completely covered with shell.) In 1965 an additional area of 2' x 5' (10 sq. ft.) was excavated along the southeastern border of this 1961-2 test area. The slope of the southwestern edge of the shell deposit continued toward the southeast at an angle of about 40° so that the western-most 1½ ft. of the southern edge on the 22' line of the old 4' x 5' test area was free of shell, while in the 1965 excavation (3A), the western most 4 ft. on the 24' line was free of shell.

If this same angle of the overall southwestern edge of the original shell deposit continued above (northwest) the 20' line, it is obvious that the iron pipe placed at the shell edge on the 20' line does not mark the extreme southwestern edge of the shell deposit above the 18' line. This possibility has not been investigated but plans have been made to determine the entire northern edge of the original shell deposit.

The surface slope along the northeast wall of the combined test areas (Nos. 3 and 3A) is 6 inches over the 6 ft. length of this wall but the overall depth to the sand floor remains the same - 18 inches, of which the upper 15 inches is erosion soil and the lower 3 inches is decomposed shell (mostly oyster). No

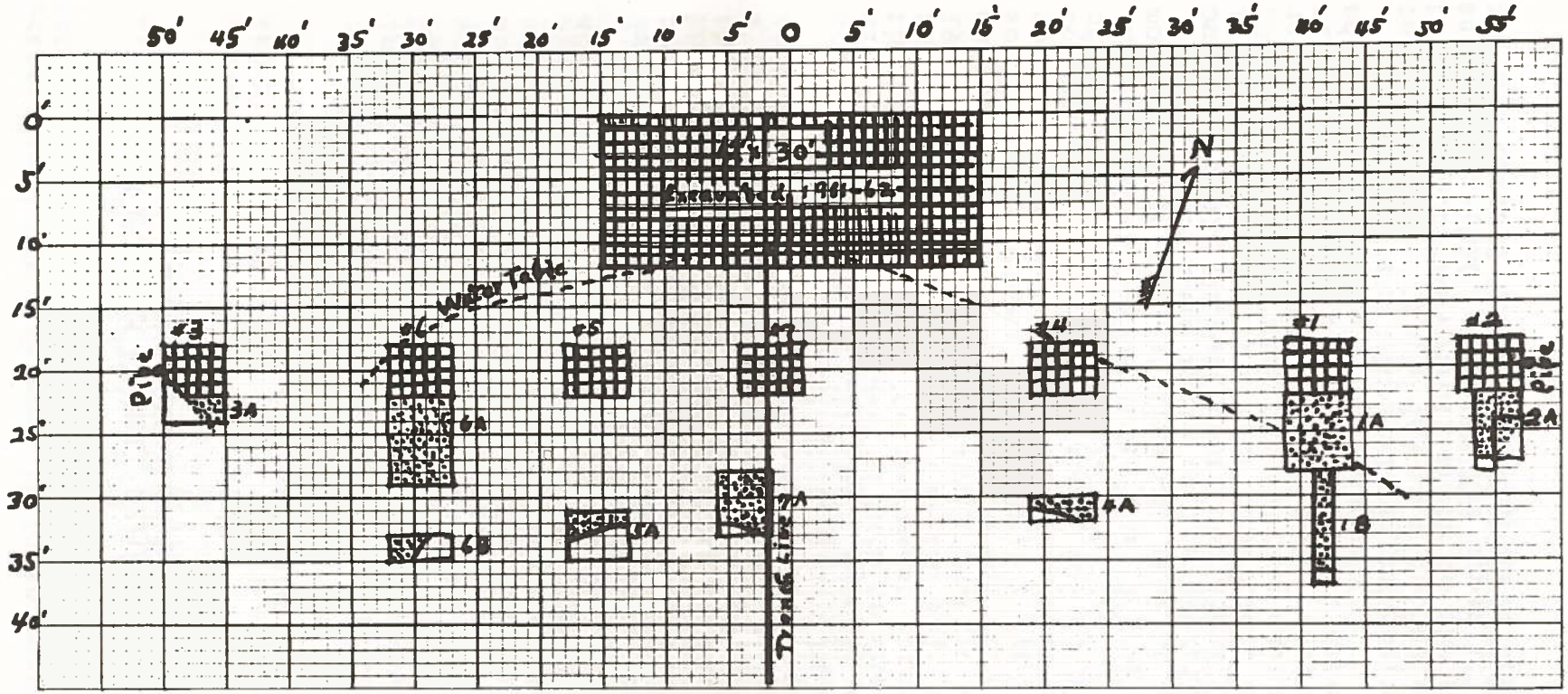

Fig. 1. Plot of the shell deposit showing its overall length and width. Both the large and the numbered cross hatched test areas centered on the 20' line were excavated in 1961-2. The various sized rectangular areas, numbered A or B were excavated in 1965. In these the stippled areas indicate shell and the clear areas the absence of shell.

conch shells were found. The sand under the shell is relatively soft and yellowish in color.

Artifacts: A piece of the left scapula (articular end) 3 inches long was found on the shell layer and may have been a discard from a later Indian occupation. Stone: Only a few pebbles (jasper and quartzite) but no worked stone was recovered. Pottery: 7 small, soft and fragile fragments were found on the yellowish sand below the shell. 5 of these sherds were reddish-brown and 2 cream colored. All 7 were found within a radius of 1½ ft. near the southeastern corner of No. 3A. These thick walled sherds could not be recovered intact. They may or may not have been fired. No hard sherds were found. The surface decoration of the reddish brown fragments suggests net impressions. The 7 sherds may have been discarded before the shells were deposited, but this seems unlikely since none was found in the larger (6 versus 4 sq. ft.) southwestern shell-free corner of 3A.

No ground water was encountered. The sand was soft and there is no evidence that this area (No. 3 and 3A) had been covered with water for long periods of time. The working conditions were excellent so that very few of the artifacts in this 10 sq. ft. could have escaped detection.

Test area 6A.- This area adjoins No. 6 (previously reported in detail)[1] on the southeast and extends from the 22' line to the 29' line, i.e. 7' long and 5' wide and contains 35 sq. ft. (Fig. 1). This entire area was covered with decomposed shell except for an area centered on the 26' line where the decomposed roots of a large tree were located. The shell layer varies in thickness from approximately 2 to 14 inches. The water table appears to be about 2 inches lower than in 1961-2 and the lower border of the shell layer dips below the present water line at the 21' line while the upper surface of the shell layer dips below the water table at the 26' line (Fig. 1 and Figs. 2a & 2b).

There is a ridge of shell possibly 2 ft. wide extending diagonally across the 5 ft. wide excavation from the northeast to the southwest with a maximum thickness of 12-14 inches (the thickest encountered in the 660 sq. ft. excavated) at the 23' line on the northeast wall and the 25' line on the southwest wall. This area on the northeast wall is graphically shown in the drawing and photograph (Figs. 2a and 2b).

The dark gray discoloration of the sand below the shell begins at the 21' line and gets progressively thicker and the sand harder packed toward the 29' line (southeast).

Artifacts.- In the sand and mud overlying the shell layer, several outlying (from the main area) bits of white man's trash (fragments of large and small glass bottles and jars) were recovered. Bone: A 4 inch long fragment of the shaft of a deer cannon bone, 2 fragments of vertebrae and 2 very small fragments of shaft bones were found. Pottery: Two large thick-walled grit-tempered net impressed (Fig. 3a) were recovered. One of the pieces was so soft it broke into fragments while trying to remove it from the packed sand. One hard rimsherd with overall cord impressions and 2 pieces of thick walled (3/8") sand tempered sherds were found. Stone: Eight large chips, 5 rejects - all jasper, several

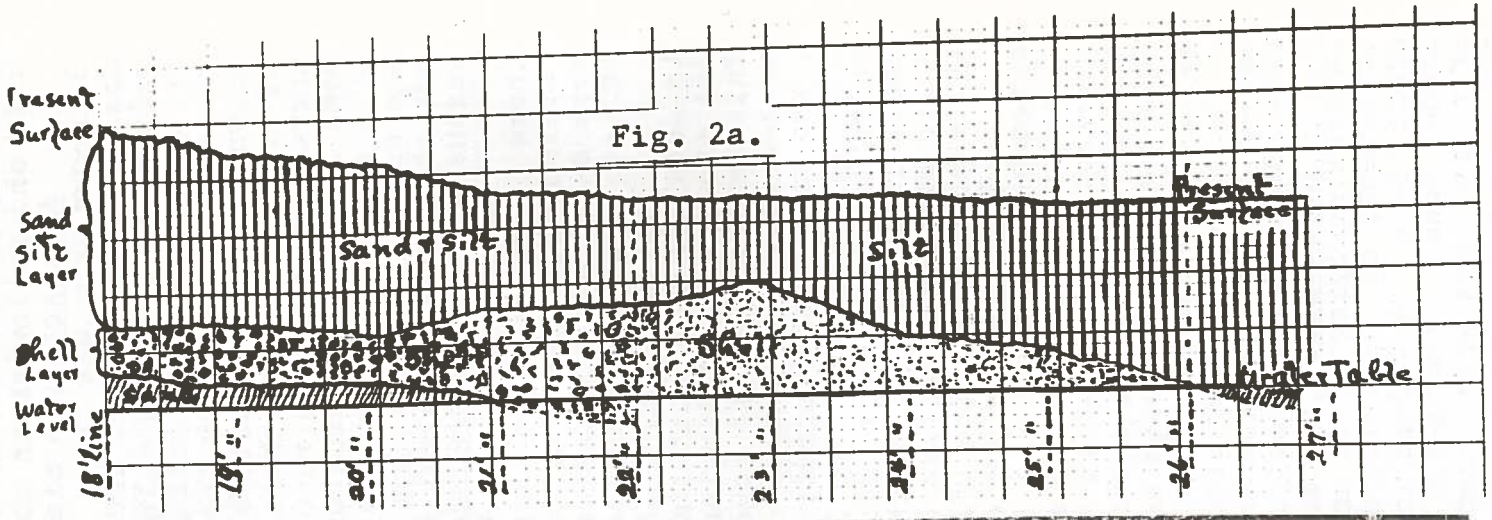

Fig. 2a.

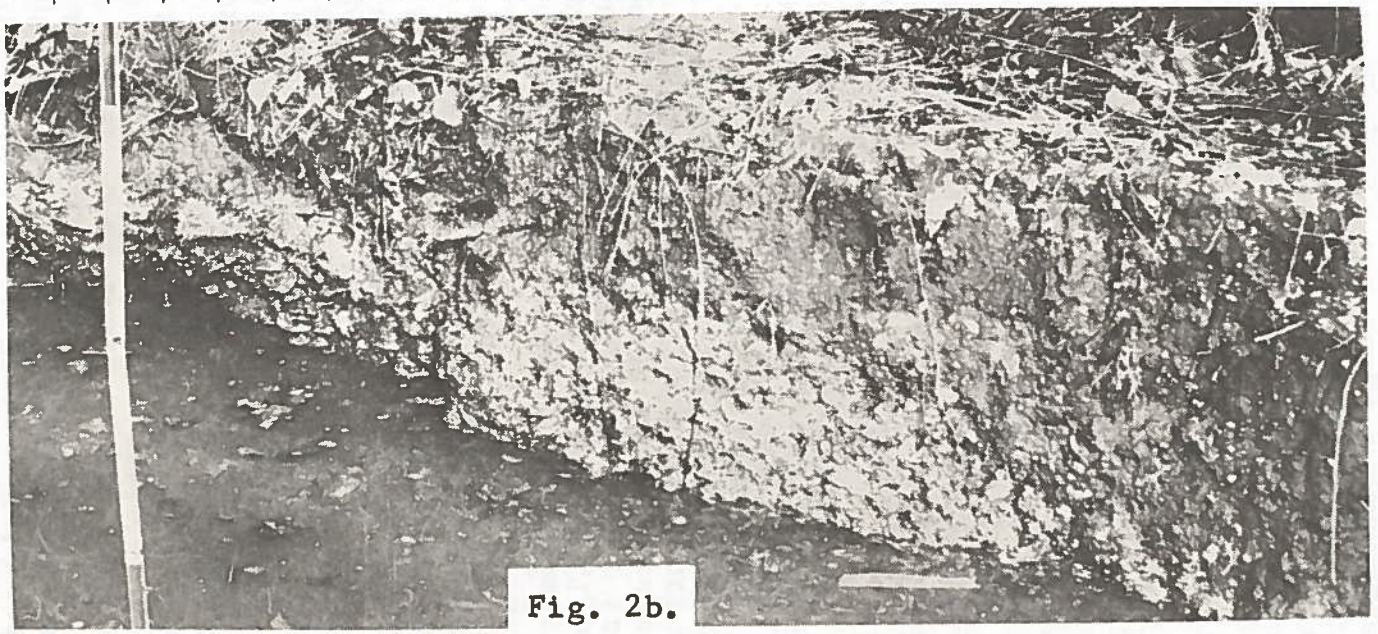

Fig. 2b.

Fig. 2a. Profile sketch of northeast wall of test areas nos. 6 and 6A showing; (1) present surface in relation to water table; (2) relative thickness of sand-silt layer; (3) relative thickness of shell layer and where it dips below the present water table; (4) the line of demarcation between the coarser and finer shell fragments just beyond the 22' line.

Fig. 2b. Photograph of the same area shown in Fig. 2a.

pebbles, one with a small oyster shell attached and one fire-cracked piece of sand stone were recovered. Also the broken end of a small end scraper (Fig. 3b) was found. Shell: Portions of 5 eroded conch shells were recovered - one a very small channel conch (Busycon canaliculatum) 1-3/4" in length. Two intact but soft black walnut shells (Fig. 3e) were found on the sand about 27 inches below present surface and near the 28 ft. line. Several large, soft, badly decayed roots (probably willow) were exposed in the immediate area of the walnuts.

As noted in the first report[1], all but one of the artifacts were recovered on or in the dark, hard packed sand and as much as 2 inches below the shell layer. It should be pointed out here that more artifacts were recovered from No. 6 in 1961-2 and from 6A in 1965 than from any other test area. The possibility that this finding is in some way related to the much thicker ridge of shell in this area should be borne in mind.

Test area No. 6B (Fig. 1).- Since the entire 35 sq. ft. of test area 6A was covered with shell except the area with root molds of a tree, we went to the 35' line, in line with No. 6A and excavated a 2' x 4' (8 sq. ft.) between the 33' and the 35' lines. After removing the dark gray mud to a depth of 20 inches, we exposed the decomposed shell layer which covered approximately the southwestern half to a maximum depth of 7 inches. The northeastern part of this area was shell free. The entire 8 sq. ft. was excavated to a depth of 36 inches - the last 9 inches being packed dark gray sand and suggests that the area had been covered with water for a long time before the shells were deposited.

Artifacts.- The only artifacts found were 3 soft thick walled, grit-tempered sherds in the sand below the shell. They were light gray in color suggesting all 3 were from the same pot. The decorations could not be determined. No artifacts were found in the shell free area.

Test area No. 5A.- This 4' x 5' excavation (20 sq. ft.) extended from the 35' line back to the 31' line. The 9 ft. area between the old test area No. 5 and the new No. 5A (22' - 31' lines) was not excavated (Fig. 1) because our primary interest was to determine the southeastern limit of the shell deposit. As indicated in Fig. 1 we encountered shell for 2½ ft. along the southwestern edge of this area. The shell layer tapered to a width of 1 ft. at the northeastern edge. The southeastern edge of the badly decomposed shell was sharply defined and averaged 4-5 inches in thickness. The upper surface of the shell layer was exposed after removing about 20 inches of wet nearly black sticky mud. We dug a further 10 inches into the hard packed dark gray sand but did not get through the dark gray stained sand at the 34"-35" depth. Several large and small soft root molds were encountered in the last 15 inches. Water was encountered at the 16" level several inches above the shell layer. This necessitated frequent bailing while removing the shell and sand layers.

Artifacts.- Five small sherds, one of which was a rim sherd; 2 flakes and one small fragment of shaft bone, and 2 pieces of hard blackened wood (possibly oak) were recovered from the packed sand under the shell but no artifacts were recovered from the shell-free area. For a 20 sq. ft. area very few arti-

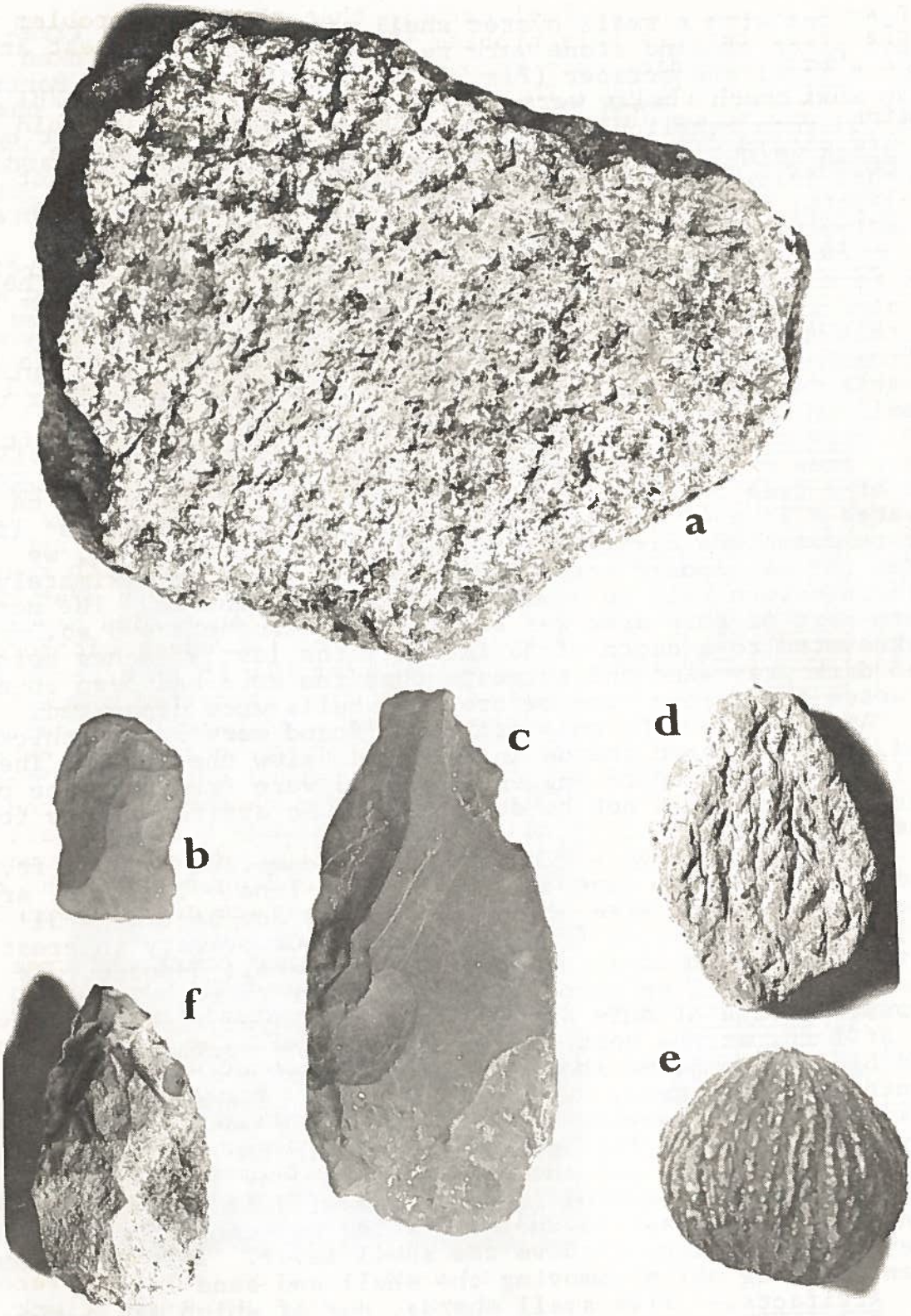

Fig. 3. Examples of the artifacts recovered (see text for descriptions).

facts were found, and we feel certain that the water problem was not the cause because this problem was just as bad in test area No. 6A where many more were recovered.

Test area No. 7A.- This 4½' x 5' area between the 28' and 33' lines had to be shifted to the southwest side of the old 1961-2 drainage trench line instead of centering it on the trench line because a large live black willow tree to the northeast of the trench line might complicate the excavation. We removed the black sticky mud (about 24" thick) down to the shell layer between the 28' and 33' lines over the 22½ sq. ft. area and water began to well up rapidly necessitating frequent bailing. The shell layer, badly decomposed, averages 3" - 4" thick over most of the area except in the southwest corner. Here the shell layer ends at the 32' line and the edge of the shell slopes easterly to the 33' line at 3 ft. (Fig. 1) making the shell-free area about 1 ft. wide at the southwestern corner and extending beyond the 33' line at 2½ ft. The shell-free area covers approximately 2½ sq. ft. of the total 22½ sq. ft. excavated.

After removal of the shell we took out the hard, packed dark gray sand to a depth of about 4 inches below the shell layer.

Artifacts.- All were found in the sand below the shell.

Stone: One, a fragment of slate roughly rectangular with rounded corners and polished measuring 3" long x 1-3/8" wide x 3/4" thick at one end and 1/4" at the other end due to a one-sided bevel, from which chips had been struck on most of the edges but more from the thin end, making it blunt pointed possibly in an attempt to shape a large arrowhead (Fig. 3c). We also recovered a small well chipped but thick and narrow jasper arrowhead (Fig. 3f).

Pottery: Four fragments - all from different pots - were recovered, the largest is quartz tempered and cord marked (Fig. 3d). The other 3 sherds were small thin walled and more curved but the decorations were obscure. All 4 fragments were hard and well fired, although buried in the sand below the shells. We also recovered an intact black walnut shell lying in the mud just above the shell layer, about 23 inches below the present surface and between the 32' and 33' lines.

Test area 4A (Fig. 1).- We cleared the brush and tree limbs from an area 2' x 5' between the 30' and 32' lines. In removing the 17 inches of black mud we encountered and removed large roots from a live black willow tree near the north end of the 2' x 5' area. The shell layer here is about 4" thick and composed of approximately 1/3 oyster and 2/3 broken clam shells. One of the clam shell fragments shows concentric cracks in front of the hinge as if it had been hit with a hammerstone. The shell covered the entire area except the southwest corner. The shell-free area is about 1 ft. wide at the southwest corner and tapers to zero at 3 ft. on the 32 ft. line.

Artifacts.- After removing the shell we took out about 4 inches of hard packed dark gray sand and from this sand recovered 3 flakes and 4 pebbles from which flakes had been struck. No pottery was found in the 10 sq. ft. area.

Test area 1A (Fig. 1).- This area extends from the 22' to the 28' lines, measures 5' x 6' and contains 30 sq. ft. All of

this area was excavated beginning at the 22' line. The erosion soil was removed to a depth of 13" down to the shell. The shell layer covered the entire 30 sq. ft. to a depth varying from 2 to 4 inches lying on gray sand. After removing 2" to 4" of this gray sand yellowish sand appeared. No ground water was encountered in the 30 sq. ft. area - only wet sand near the 28' line at a depth of 18 inches, but after 24 hours water covered possibly 3 sq. ft. of the southwest corner along the 28' line.

Artifacts.- Four fragments of pottery were recovered of which 2 had knotted net decorations, quartz tempered, and seem to be from the same pot. The other 2 sherds were grit-tempered, thick-walled, but the decorations were worn off. Stone: Several quartz and jasper pebbles but no worked stone was found. One small badly corroded knobbed conch shell was recovered.

Test area 1B.- Since test area 1A was entirely covered with shell and our objective was to determine the southeastern limit of the shell, a trench approximately 1 ft. wide was begun at the middle of the southeast edge of test area 1A and extended 9 ft. to the 37' line (Fig. 1). The shell was found to extend only to the 36' line or 8 ft. The shell layer, as in 1A varied from 2-4 inches in thickness but thinned rapidly after 6 ft. The shell layer was partly covered with water at the 28' line and completely covered at the 36' line.

Artifacts.- No pottery or bone was found. One flake and one reject were recovered. The shell was predominately clam and badly disintegrated. The sand under the shell layer was dark gray in color throughout the 9 ft. trench. We may have overlooked some small artifacts because of the water and narrow trench.

Test area No. 2A (Fig. 1).- This area is located at the extreme northeastern edge of the original shell deposit and extends from the 22' to the 28' lines. It consists of 2 parts excavated separately. The first part consists of a trench similar to that described in test area 1B and extends from the 22' to the 28' lines, and the second part includes the 2' x 5' area between the trench and the northeastern boundary of the old test area No. 2. The two parts of 2A contain 16 sq. ft. The depth of the trench at the 22' line (beginning) was 16 inches and 17 inches at the 28' line. The shell layer at the 22' line was 2-3 inches thick and gradually thinned to scattered shell fragments and to zero at the 27' line, but the trench was continued to the 28' line. The soft yellow sand bottom (also noted in 1961-2 excavation of test area No. 2) continued throughout the trench suggesting that no water has stood here since the shells were deposited. The yellow sand layer is moist but not wet. No artifacts were recovered from the trench. The 2 x 5 ft. area was excavated down to the yellow sand to determine if possible the slope of the extreme northeastern edge of the shell deposit. It was found that the shell edge began to veer to the southwest at the 25' line and met the trench at the 27' line (Fig. 1). Thus a triangular area comprising about 3 sq. ft. of the extreme southeastern corner of the 5' x 2' area is shell free.

Artifacts.- No definite pottery fragments, worked stone or flakes were found, but several small soft lumps of clay were

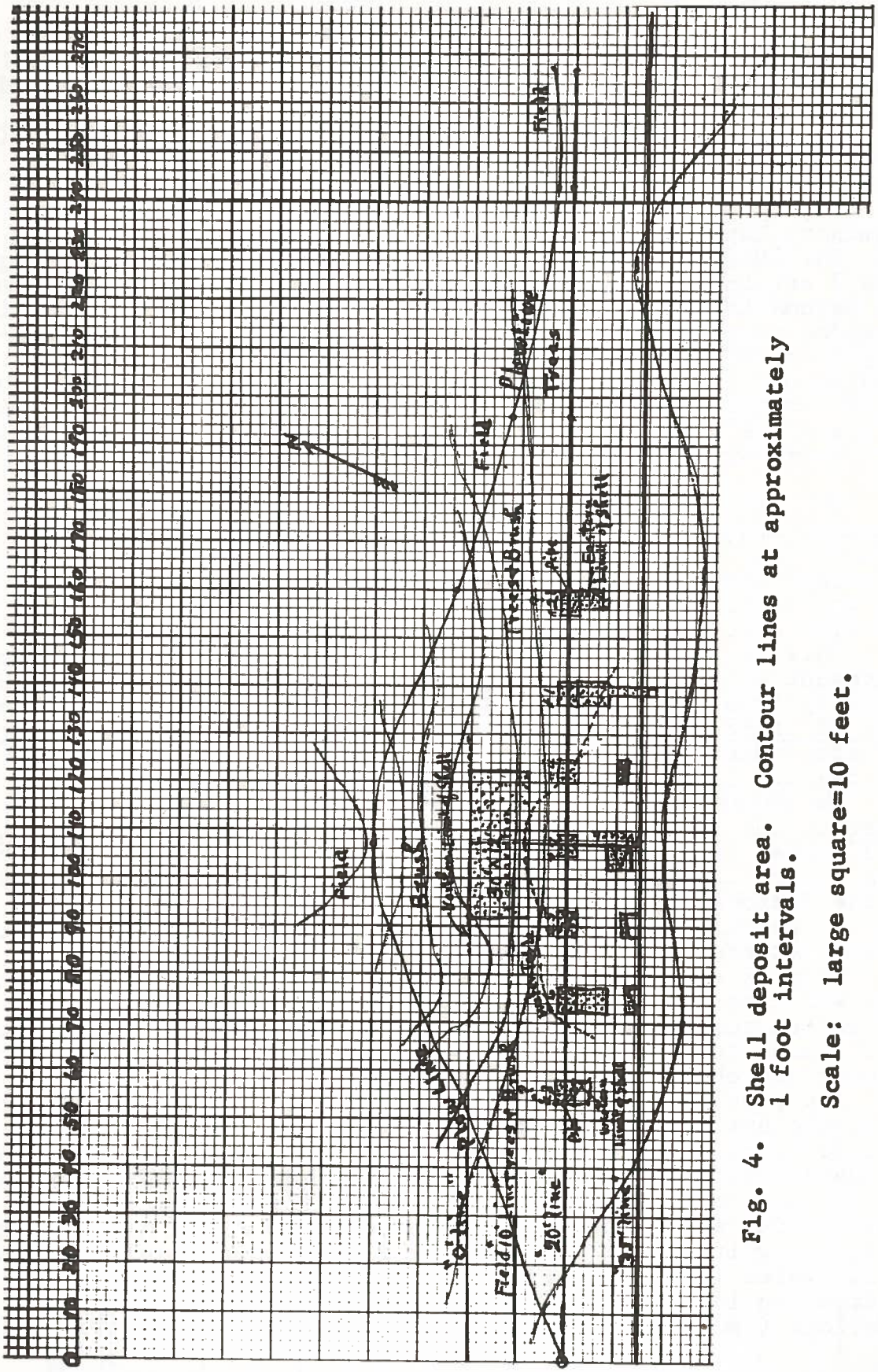

Fig. 4. Shell deposit area. Contour lines at approximately 1 foot intervals.

Scale: large square=10 feet.

recovered that might have been remnants of clay coils. Two cracked stones (1 quartz and 1 sandstone) together with several jasper and quartzite pebbles and one hammerstone were recovered from the sand below the shell.

Discussion.- After an interval of 3 years an additional 160 sq. ft. of the shell deposit have been excavated primarily to determine its limits on the southwest, northeast and southeast, and, if possible, to check the conclusions arrived at in the Preliminary Report.

The 1965 excavations of the southeastern extensions (Fig. 1) of the 7 original test areas show that 2 (Nos. 6 and 1) of them reach beyond the 35' line while the 3 (nos. 5, 7 and 4) central extensions reach only to the 33' line, suggesting a slight convexity or cove. The two end test areas (Nos. 3 and 2) do not extend beyond the 27' line because of the rounded or sloping southwest and southeast corners of the shell deposit and both of these test areas are on much higher ground, neither of which has probably been covered with water over a protracted period in post glacial times.

The old beach or shore line of this cove can still be recognized roughly by the demarcation line between the softer yellowish sand to the southwest, northwest and northeast and the hard packed dark gray (due to silt and organic matter) sand underlying the shell layer to the southeast. The packed gray sand, when freed from silt and organic matter by washing, is bleached.

This old beach line (Fig. 1) may be traced, roughly, from the present excavations as follows: It cuts across test area No. 6 diagonally from the southwest to the northeast from the 23' line to the 22' line; across No. 5 somewhere above the 18' line; across No. 7 also somewhere above the 18' line; across No. 4 somewhere below the 22' line, and across No. 1 near the 28' line.

The water table follows somewhat the same curve but much farther to the northwest. It appears, by crude measurements, to be 2-3 inches lower during the late summer and autumn of 1965 than it was during the same period in 1961-2. This may be connected with the 3 drought years (1962-65). The present contour lines shown in approximately 1' intervals (Fig. 4) also follow roughly the same pattern as the old beach and the water table lines.

Only black willow trees (some 2' in diameter) are present in the wet area beyond the old beach line between test areas No. 3 on the southwest and No. 2 on the northeast, while on the higher ground to the southwest, northwest and northeast, sassafras, persimmon and cherry are present.

The problem posed by confirming the 1961-2 observation that most of the artifacts were recovered from the first 2-3 inches of sand underlying the disintegrated shell layer is still unsolved. Were these artifacts and stones discarded ahead of the advancing shell deposition or did they gradually settle through the soft disintegrating shell layer by the force of gravity? it is also true that significantly more pottery fragments and worked stones were recovered from the 140 sq. ft. of the 7 test areas in 1961-2 than from the 160 sq. ft. of their corresponding "A" and "B" excavations (Table 1). The almost total absence of artifacts in

Table 1

TEST AREA and SQ. FT.	Bone	Sherds	Stone					Shells		Remarks
			Chips	Rejects	Shaped tools	Hammerstones	Fire cracked	Conch	Sea Snails	
3 A 10 sq. ft.	1	7								Left scapula, large dog or deer No water problem
6 A 35 sq. ft.	5	5	8	5	1		1	5	1	Small channeled conch, overall length 1-3/4" large root molds, 2 black walnuts
6 B 8 sq. ft.		3								
5 A 20 sq. ft.	1	5	2				1			2 large root molds 2 pcs. of wood (oak?)
7 A 22½ sq. ft.		4			2					1 black walnut, in mud above shell
4 A 10 sq. ft.			3	4						
1 A 30 sq. ft.		4						1		3 pieces bark no water problem
1 B 9 sq. ft.			1	1				2		2 pieces of wood or bark
2 A 16 sq. ft.						1	2	2		7 fragments of clay coils? no water problem
Total 1965 from 160 sq. ft.	7	28	14	10	3	1	4	10	1	
Total 1961-2 from 140 sq. ft.	53	153	75	26	2	2	4	16		

the areas beyond the shell is not significant because the square footage (possibly 25) is too small. Further excavations beyond the southeastern edge of the shell layer are indicated. All the evidence so far collected favors the view that shell decomposition and the force of gravity caused the artifacts and pebbles to settle.

Except in test areas Nos. 3, 1 and 2 all the artifacts recovered were below the water table. The pottery types in general duplicated those described in the earlier report,[1] i.e. grit and sand tempered, thick walled and the predominant decorations knotted net, net and cord. Therefore our earlier suggestion as to age may have been too conservative. A few fragments were shell tempered but no thin walled, fabric impressed specimens (predominant in the Townsend series and in most other late Woodland middens) were recovered.

The most significant difference was the occurrence of more soft friable specimens. Several sherds were broken in attempting to lift them until we lifted them with a layer of sand attached. Soft friable sherds occurred in close association with the hard ones. Nor were the soft sherds confined to areas below the water table. In the southeast corner of test area 3A we recovered 7 separate fragments of soft sherds. A major cause of soft sherds therefore appears to be insufficient or uneven firing of these large thick walled pots. That the pots were broken before firing is also a possibility.

The greatest concentration of both pottery fragments and worked stone (see table 1) occurred in test area No. 6A just as in the 1961-2 excavation of adjoining test area No. 6. There is a possibility that the greater concentration of pottery and worked stone in test areas 6 and 6A was connected with the thick ridge of shell running diagonally across the No. 6A. This ridge of shell is the thickest we have encountered in the total 660 sq. ft. so far excavated. There is the possibility that this ridge was used as a place for fires - hence a concentrated working area. On the other hand as shown in Figs. 2a and 2b the predominant type of shell seems to have changed abruptly from fragmented clam to oyster shell laminae at the northeast corner of No. 6A near the 22' line. No concentration of charcoal was noted in this ridge of shell nor anywhere else in the 660 sq. ft. excavated. Which of these two possibilities, or neither, is the correct explanation of the shell ridge and the associated concentration of sherds and worked stone?

The three intact black walnut hulls found in test areas 6A and 7A also pose a question since they are the only nut shells found in the entire 660 sq. ft. excavated. They may have been remnants from a later Indian occupation or, more likely, deposited by squirrels and worked down as the tree roots rotted. Both black walnut and hickory trees were numerous in this area at the contact (historical) period and both species of nut shells (usually in fragments) are frequently found in the middens of the Late Woodland period.

As in the earlier report, we came to the conclusion that the oyster shell was the most disintegrated while the conchs and sea snail shells were the best preserved. Mention has already been

made of the rather large numbers of unworked pebbles (jasper, quartz, chert, etc.) of workable size preserved in the sand below the shell, and it may be pertinent in relation to the place where the oysters, clams, conchs and snails came from to point out that 2 of the jasper pebbles had oyster shell fragments firmly attached. To us it suggests that these mollusks came from a nearby shallow sea. Bone fragments were conspicious by their scarcity as compared with Late Woodland shell middens or the 7 test areas excavated in 1961-2. All the material recovered from the 160 sq. ft. excavated in 1965 is summarized in Table 1 and, for comparison, the totals from the 140 sq. ft. excavated in 1961-2.

No further light has been thrown on the bearing of natural and superimposed man-made geological changes in interpreting the age and present state of this artificial shell deposit. The man-made geological changes derive mostly from the building of the Delaware Breakwater (1825-35), the digging of the Lewes and Rehoboth Canal (1910-16), soil erosion of the past 350 years and the extensive systems of drainage ditches on both sides of the canal dug by the Civilian Conservation Corp. in the 1930's.

References and Notes

1. The Archeolog 1965, Vol XVII, No. 1.

2. Thanks to Orville H. Peets and Col. R. E. McGarraugh for the photographic work.

RECOVERY OF A RHYOLITE BLADE FROM THE SUB-SOIL

by

David Marine

The rhyolite blade shown in Fig. 1 was lifted from the subsoil by tractor plowing in a garden plot on Route 14 between Rehoboth and Dewey Beach that the author has used annually for over 35 years. This same land has been devoted to agriculture for more than 250 years. The cause of its exposure was that in rounding a corner of the garden plot the tractor plows were not lifted and each year's plowing deepened a curved trench-like depression in this corner area that now averages nearly 1½ feet below the surrounding land surface.

The actual find was due to hand planting pole lima beans. I had pushed a bean into the yellowish sandy clay about 1½ inches when I felt a hard object in the area where the bean was to be placed. On lifting the hard object out and scraping off the adherent clay I was greatly surprised to see the percussion chipped surface and pressure flaked edges. It was difficult to remove all the adherent clay with brush and water.

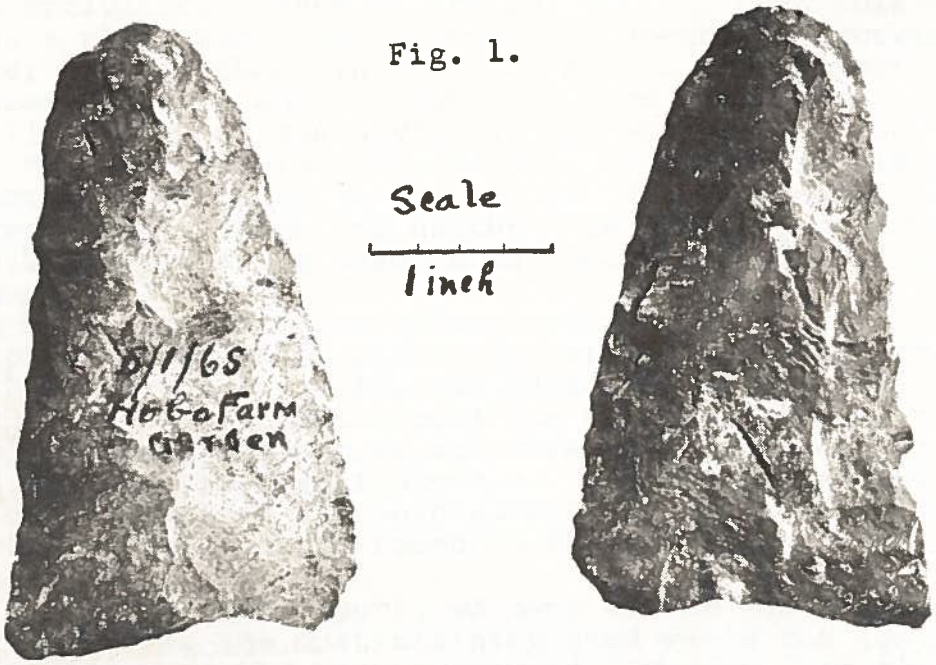

Fig. 1.

The stem of the blade had been broken off flush with the shoulders (perhaps the reason it was discarded) and the overall measurements were: length, 3-3/8"; width near the rounded tip, 3/4" and at shoulders 1-7/8"; maximum thickness 11/32" and the maximum thickness at the broken off stem end 7/32".

From the general shape, size and thinness, despite the fact that it originally had a stem, we believe this artifact should be classified as a rhyolite knife.

The nearest deposits of rhyolite, an eruptive rock, occur in scattered beds in the Blue Ridge Mountains from Harper's Ferry to the Susquehannah River near Harrisburg, Pa. It is unusually suitable for the making of large, broad, thin, leaf like blades such as knives, scrapers and projectile points. Holmes[1] has located and visited several extensive Indian quarries of this material and believes that many of the scattered blades and most of the caches found in the tidewater areas were roughed out at the quarries rather than from the relatively infrequent water-borne boulders found along the streams and transported to camp sites. Continuing erosion and deeper plowing should expose more of these artifacts. Rhyolite artifacts are not common along the coast while Holmes[2] states that 1/4 of the spear heads and arrow points found in the Washington area (Potomac River Valley) were made from rhyolite.

How the blade got into the subsoil and how long it has been there one can only speculate.

References

1. Holmes, W. H., 15th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, pp. 73 and 88.
2. _____, Ibid., p. 140.

[redacted] LEWIS LITTLE, 1950-1965 [redacted]

We regret to announce the death of Lewis Little, 15 years old, one of our young members who died in an automobile accident on November 18, 1965, between Lewes and Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.

Lewis lived with his mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Little, in Nassau, Delaware. He attended Lewes High School and was a 10th grade student. He enjoyed all kinds of sports and was very active in his school's other programs.

He became interested in Archeology five or six years ago through his good friend and neighbor, Mr. James Parsons, also a member of the Sussex Society of Archeology and History. He was a regular attendant at our meetings and frequently brought artifacts for identification. Because of such interest he joined the Society in the early part of 1965. Surface hunting and collecting Indian relics rated first among his hobbies.

He will be sadly missed by his mother, friends, and fellow members of the Society.

M. T., Jr.

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