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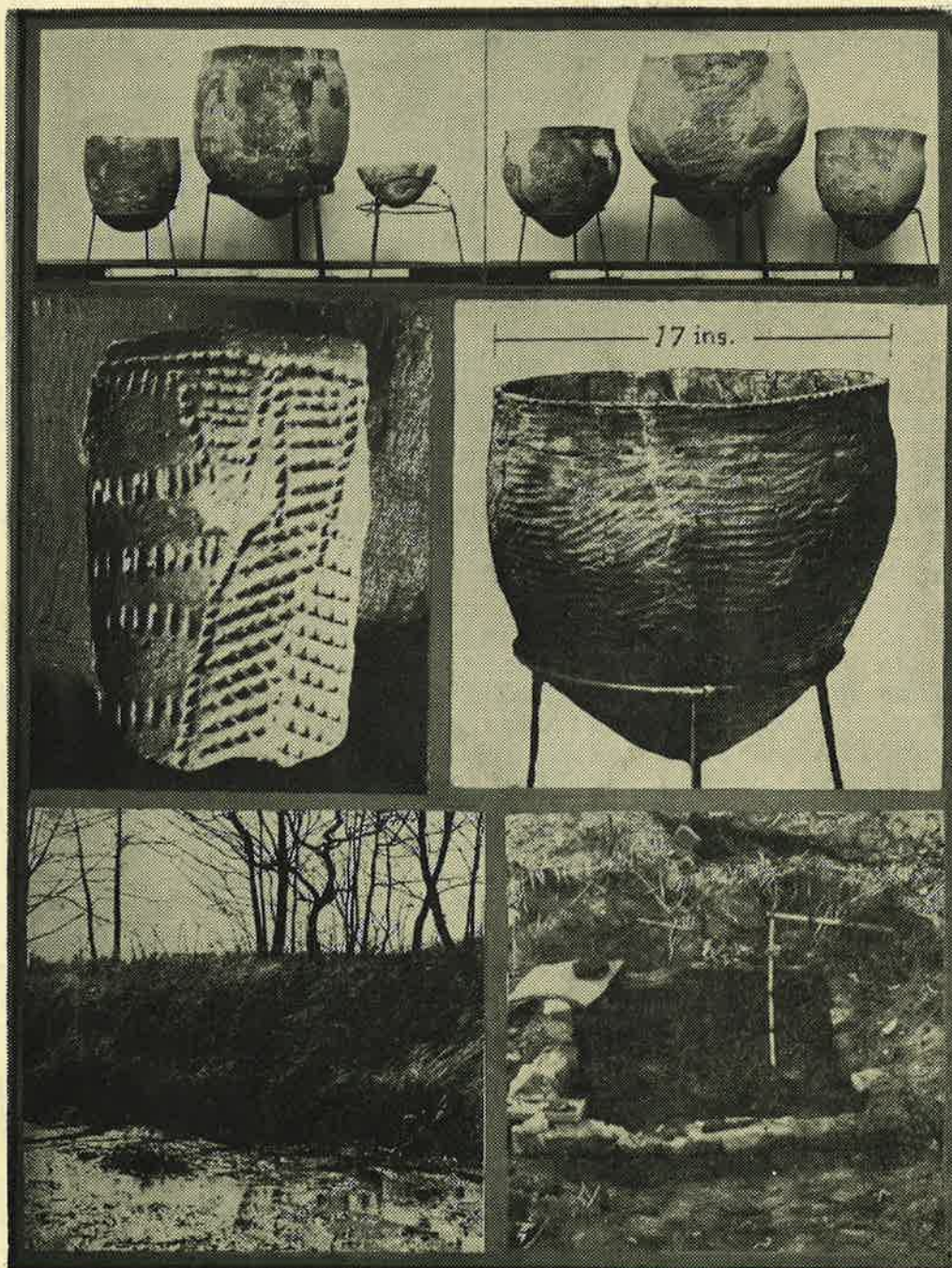
# The ARCHEOLOG

## NEWS LETTER OF THE SUSSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

O. H. Peets, Editor

May 17, 1951

Lewes, Delaware





## The Caldron

The large pot or caldron illustrated on the cover was found near the Lewes-Rehoboth canal in the area called Wolf's Neck. It is now in the Lewes Museum. Mr. Taber, State Forester, has a slightly larger one of a different shape and markings, and Mr. Charles Stein of Wilmington has found sherds of one in Sussex County that seems to be similar to Mr. Taber's and perhaps as large. Pots of this size are quite rare. The Museum of the American Indian in New York City reported that they had nothing so large, though a few have been found in upper New York State. In spite of its size the sherds of this caldron are not thicker than average, whereas the others are notably heavy.

The fact that this pot was found in a pit at a place called by members of the Delaware Society "The Moore Shell Heap" has caused some misunderstanding. The explanation is that although the former was directly under the latter there was really no connection between them. The Indians who made the shell heap were as unaware of the pits below them as were our Wilmington colleagues. Several layers of sand and flood deposit separate the pits (one was inside the other) from the shell mantle above them. There were no shells in the pits which may have been used for storage.

Inside the entire rim of this caldron and extending down into it for six or eight inches (below this distance it may have been effaced) is what is generally called a cord-wound stick decoration. Some rim sherds from the Townsend site were decorated -- on the outside -- by what was unquestionably a cord-wound stick. The bands were less than an inch wide, but in one case the end of the stick made rather deep holes in the clay because of the slight outward curve of the rim. In two examples I have, the repeats are very visible. If there are any repeats on the inside of the caldron I have failed to find them though I made castings of suspicious places. Instead of a decoration, this imprinting would readily be taken as an indication of the technique used in molding the pot, were it not for those who insist that any evidence of coiling proves that "unsupported coiling" was the method used. Normally the product of unsupported coiling has a smooth surface, and a patterned surface is not a necessary result of the technique so if a pot is thought to have been made by unsupported coiling we must suppose a patterned surface to have been made with a decorative intention, or because of a superstitious traditionalism. Several pots from the "School" site show traces of an all-over fabric impression which had been carefully scraped off before the pot was fired. The tradition came to an end here -- if it ever existed.

Reliable eye-witness accounts mention four methods as being in use by the Indians and in all of them the clay could have been handled in coils or filets, so coil breaks alone do not mean that unsupported coiling (probably a late development) was the method employed. If a single pot is proved to have been molded, in spite of coil breaks, the whole matter of non-decorative markings will have to be reconsidered, and these large jars with regular impressions inside and discontinuous ones outside will be an interesting subject of speculation.

## The Pipe Fragment

While scouting for sites on the south side of Canary Creek about apposite the Russell farm, Ralph Karl found a piece of Indian clay pipe which, enlarged, is reproduced on the cover. It shows very well the peculiar markings called "rouletting" though the Indians, who were ignorant of the wheel, are not supposed to have invented a roulette such as is known to engravers. Some tribes did have stone burins which could have been as good for engraving on some surfaces as our steel ones would be. Some clay pipes may have been decorated with lines or dots made with a burin, but a twenty times enlargement of this fragment showed a pattern of dots that could not be perfectly duplicated with a burin. It was perfectly imitated, however, by a section of clam shell ground so the corrugations on the inside periphery made a dentate edge.

Since finding this pipe fragment, Mr. Karl has gone through his collection of worked shells from the Townsend site and found a section of clam shell ground so as to give this serrated edge.

This piece of pipe and the section of clam shell are now at the Smithsonian where our theory that would relate them to each other is being considered.

We are glad to report also that Mr. Watkins is much interested in the Colonial material sent him from the Russell site and is having some photographs made. He may soon be able to send us some dates, and speaking of dates, Mrs. Blaker writes that carbon 14 would not help us in dating any Colonial site, the admissible error being too great. She notes that Lamoka in New York State has been dated as 4,395 years of elapsed time plus or minus 350 years. Formerly it was estimated at 300 A.D. Although of no use to us in the Colonial project, radio-carbon dating is a great accomplishment and, as Mr. Hutchinson pointed out, we might find an Indian site on which it could be used so we should know what sort of organic matter should be saved and how to apply for a test. The University of Chicago must have rules covering this.

The Dyke, so far as one may judge with a tangle of underbrush intervening, sights toward the location of the old house, and from the amount of work it represents, must have been the main crossing of Canary Creek for a community of some importance. No road is shown connecting with it as early as 1833 and this would suggest a movement of population away from this area and toward the present center of Lewes.

## ABORIGINAL EVIDENCE FROM THE GROUNDS OF THE LEWES SCHOOL

It has been often remarked that as civilization advances in its material aspects the evidences of ancient cultures are erased. The corollary to this idea should be that it is often because of the physical expansion of modern civilization that evidence of ancient cultures is revealed which otherwise would likely remain forever undiscovered. Such has been the case during the construction of additions to the Lewes School.

Several years ago grading operations incidental to the laying out of a new athletic field at the school brought to light the remains of a number of refuse pits. The huge machines employed to grade off a small knoll sliced through these pits and scattered much of the contents of their upper levels over a wide area, utterly destroying most of the aboriginal evidence which they may have contained. When the damaged pits were noted by observers interested in archaeological matters, the grading machines were directed around them and the remaining refuse deposits were examined. This work was necessarily hurriedly done but yielded, nevertheless, a number of interesting incised pottery sherds. A brief description of them was made at the time<sup>1</sup> in which it was indicated that they bore a close resemblance to the pottery being recovered from the excavations then in progress at the Townsend Site. Subsequently a damaged refuse pit found in a bank cut away by the grading machine yielded enough sherds of a large vessel to permit its restoration by Mr. Orville Peets. This vessel is shown fifth from the left in the top row of the photograph on the front cover of this issue of the Archeolog.

In the spring of 1950 further extensive grading operations were carried out on the school property preparatory to and in conjunction with a program of expansion of the physical plant. Again the work was done by tractor drawn machines. With almost the first scoopful of earth to be removed, a large shell refuse pit was uncovered. Fortunately the grader did almost no material damage to the contents and it was possible to divert the machinery from the spot. Messers William S. Ingram, Sr., Ralph Karl, Roger Vandegrift, and James Parsons were notified of the discovery and these gentlemen proceeded at once to excavate the pit with great care.

A considerable quantity of pottery was recovered along with a nearly complete elbow-type clay pipe and two pipe stems of Indian manufacture, several bone implements and a perforated gorget. All of this material except the gorget was later turned over to the writer for the possession of the school. It has been possible to reconstruct three vessels from the sherds recovered. These appear as numbers two, three, and six from the left in the photograph shown on the cover. Enough sherds of a fourth vessel were recovered to permit its restoration but this has not yet been accomplished.

<sup>1</sup>The Archeolog, September 15, 1948, p. 6



In the spring of 1951 during the concluding stages of the building expansion at the school further grading operations revealed four additional refuse pits. The first yielded only a clay pipe stem and several bone implements and contained no significant sherds of pottery. At the very bottom of the second, collapsed in a heap, lay the broken sherds of the vessel shown as number one in the photograph on the cover. The third pit yielded almost no pottery but several fine examples of bone awls were recovered by Mr. James A. Moore who did the excavation. From the fourth were taken enough sherds to permit the restoration of the vessel shown as number four from the left.

In the amateur opinion of this writer all of the pottery from the school grounds fits the patterns established at the Townsend Site. There are minor variations, of course, in the shapes and sizes of the vessels, but there are no significant differences. Present were examples of Townsend corded horizontal, Townsend incised band, Rappahannock incised, and Rappahannock fabric impressed types--absent only was the Townsend herringbone decoration. The aboriginal pipe is no different in any respect from examples noted at the Townsend Site, nor do the bone implements vary in any significant aspects.

It can only be concluded that the pottery recovered from the school ground represents merely an extension of the culture complex revealed at the Townsend Site. All of the material is either on exhibition or in storage at the Lewes School

BENJAMIN S. ALBERTSON, JR., WHO LEFT LEWES, DELAWARE,  
APRIL 29, FOR FOREIGN SHORES

A well known archeologist of Lewes, Delaware, Ben as he was known to all of us, had been ill for the past year. A great collector of local antiques, fire arms, old books, and manuscripts. Interested in photography, electronics and inventor of ordnance materials, fire arms, oils, and spectral illumination. An authority on fire arms, Naval, ancient and modern. A help to us local amateurs in Indian Archeology by advice on locations and sites. An interested participant in all our meetings since the inception of our Sussex Diggers' group.

Born in Camden, New Jersey, on January 9, 1889, son of the late Mr. & Mrs. Benjamin S. Albertson, Ben was stationed at Lewes during World War I, where he met and married Miss Sara Joseph, daughter of a former Captain of the Lewes Coast Guard Station. Ben has never left Lewes since then.

Ben and Sara's son, Staff Sgt. B. S. Albertson, III, stationed in Japan during his father's last illness, is flying home this week on a thirty day furlough. Young Ben will try to help get the special gun oil, that his Father invented, in production again.

Ben, Sr., had served Henlopen Post as Commander, Adjutant, Chaplain, Historian, and service officer. Interested in people, helper of needy, believer in "I am my brother's keeper". Always at home on Fourth Street to a host of friends. Keeper of the unofficial Library of Lewes. Loaner of anything and everything he possessed. We remember him as one remembers a friend. These few lines are a very scant outline of a full and active life. Our only regret, that we knew him for so short a time.

Ralph Karl