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The ARCHEOLOG

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Lewes, Delaware



OUR COVER: The objects shown are all from the Willin Site, the report of which is incorporated in this number.

Platform pipes of soapstone (steatite), such as the one in the upper left, are so rarely found in Delaware as to incline us to suppose that they are not of local manufacture and they seem to belong to an earlier time than that of most of our South Delaware sites. In New York State they are most frequent in Point Peninsula Focus, Vine Valley Aspect, which puts them at about 1000 A.D. in archaeological reckoning and more than a thousand years earlier according to the latest "carbon 14" dating.

Although the Indians may not have had a taste for antiques, they would be apt to treasure a pipe even for centuries, but we should not be afraid to assume an early date if the indications favor it and no item in this row would be anachronistic in a collection of Point Peninsula artifacts.

The second from the left is the elbow of a clay pipe and shows how the clay had been folded or rolled around a grass stem or something similar which, when burned during the firing of the clay, left the required hole.

No. 3 is of antler and suggests a harpoon. Similar ones with the holes in the same place are seen in plates of Point Peninsula Focus, (Ritchie, Pre-Iroquoian Occupations of New York State) and are there called harpoons.

No. 4 is the mouthpiece of a tubular clay pipe. No 5, a bowl of a small clay pipe. No. 6, a polished and sharpened bone drill or awl.

The objects in the top row are not in the same scale as the huge pot below but are considerably enlarged so as to fill the width of the plate. This vessel is very slightly larger than the one found on the Wolf Neck Site but so like it in size, shape and outer surface treatment as to suggest that both belong to the same culture. It is noteworthy also that the former example was found in a closed pit covered by a mantle of shells about sixteen inches thick, indicating that a long period of time had elapsed after the pit had been filled -- not with refuse but with wind-blown sand.

The plates in this report are blueprints from Mr. Hutchinson's drawings or rubbings on tracing paper. Given our relatively small edition, they are much less expensive than metal photo-engravings would be.

THE WILLIN FARM SITE

18-Don-1

Excavations of July 1951

The Willin Farm Site is located on the east bank of the Marshyhope Creek about 5 miles upstream from its confluence with the Nanticoke River and just north of the village of Eldorado, Maryland. The fields around this site have long been known to surface hunters as a prolific source of sherds and darts. Local verbal reports are that some years ago a number of skeletons were removed from the high ground on the southeast of this site. No archaeological report of these burials has been found by the writer as of this date. Some local persons refer to this high ground as an Indian Mound, but expert geological examination indicates the high ground to be of natural formation. Many small sherds and oyster shells are still visible on the surface of the low grounds. Probing indicated some hard deposits below the cultivated soil level, and four pits were carefully excavated, and a number of other unfruitful exploratory holes were dug.

No. 1 pit was ovoid in shape about 4' x 5', tapering to about 2' x 2' at bottom with fairly heavy concentration of shell to 19" and disturbed soil to 21" below the bottom of the cultivated soil level. No. 2 pit was also an irregular circle about 4' x 6' diameter with disturbed soil and artifacts to 22" below cultivated soil line. No. 3 pit extended only 8" to 10" below cultivation level and was roughly 2" by 8". No. 4 is very irregular in shape and is not yet fully explored; an area of about 3' x 6' and 6" to 12" below top soil has been worked.

Significant points and material recovered to-date are:

SHELL

Although broken shells are scattered on the surface over a wide area, it was difficult to locate any mass accumulations. In the four definite pits worked, oyster shell predominated. One mussel shell and three scallop shells were noted. No conch or clam shells were identified. In all holes a relatively high frequency of fragments of turtle shell were found. Since this site is approximately 27 miles by water to the nearest present day oyster beds, we question whether the Indians transported whole oysters by canoe that distance, or whether salt water extended much farther upstream in those days.

BONE

Charred bone common in pits 1 and 2 and some in No. 4. Fragmental bones tentatively identified as deer were common. Deer antler fragments in three pits, deer teeth in Nos. 1 and 2, and some small animal bones in 1 and 2.

BONE TOOLS

One bone awl, one very sharp bone drill in pit No. 1. One piece of deer antler with hole drilled in it, possible use as harpoon, in pit 2 (See Plate 1, Sk. 5). One bone scraper from #3, one fragment

of fine polished bone needle with hole from #4. One tip of an antler tyne bored out and possibly used as an arrow point from #1 (Plate 1-Sk. 6) and several fragments of bone from Nos. 1 and 2 which may have been bone tools.

POTSHERDS

There were a few grit tempered sherds found near the top of No. 1 pit, all others were shell tempered. Many sherds found on the surface and in the upper levels of pits have had the bits of shell tempering dissolved or leached out, leaving them looking as if they were porous. This probably is due to a very acid condition of the soil. Approximately 537 potsherds were taken from the four pits. Pit No. 1 had 27 different design rim-sherds. No. 2 pit had 16 different design rim-sherds. The designs of these were of the same general type of decoration as found in the Townsend and Russell Sites near Lewes, Delaware, and included herringbone, cord wrapped, incised diagonal lines, fabric impressed, indented edges, etc., and combinations of several. One rim-sherd showed two distinct types of decoration. Most body sherds were "fabric impressed" or plain. One showed similar "fabric impressed" design both inside and outside. Bottom sherds showed no decoration but there were occasional tool marks thereon. Bottom sherds indicated a flatter bottom than those restored from the Townsend and Ritter Sites, though still somewhat pointed.

Typical designs on sherds from this site are shown on reproduced "rubblings" as shown on Plates II and III.

Curvature of most of the sherds indicated pot diameters of from 8" to 10"; the principal exception being 61 sherds from one large pot from pit 2. Sherds in this group matched edges from rim to bottom, and for over 180 degrees of body circumference, so that a fairly accurate restoration could be made (See Plate IV). This restored pot measures 17-3/4" diameter at rim, 19-1/2" at waist, and 16-3/4" high. Bottom 23/64" thick, body 3/8" and rim 1/4" thick. This pot was fabric impressed on the outside with no added rim decoration. Bottom plain with a few haphazard scratches. This is the largest pot that the writer has heard of being found on the east coast area.

STONE

A few flakes and chips of jasper, quartzite, and granite, and partially worked stone were found in all pits. Quite a few in No. 4 pit. One fairly good jasper dart (stemmed) found near bottom of shell deposit in No. 1 pit, and a broken triangular point in pit 2. No. 3 pit had very few shells but about 15 large irregular shaped field stones, haphazardly spaced, and with no evidence of heat or having been worked. They were below cultivation level but in disturbed soil, with a few miscellaneous sherds and a clay pipe elbow mentioned below. No. 4 pit had many chips and flakes of stone and several broken or unfinished triangular darts, and half of a small stone gorget.

PIPES

No. 1 pit produced one almost complete soapstone "platform" or "monitor" type pipe, found near the bottom of the shell deposit and 18" below cultivated soil level (Plate 1, Sk. 3). Pit 2 uncovered a small clay pipe bowl, rather delicate in structure (1/16" thick at rim) and very dark in color, very much darker than any other clay artifacts found. This was about 3" below cultivated soil level. (Plate 1, Sk. 4). In No. 3 pit was a section of an Indian clay pipe, being the elbow of the pipe and which showed on the fractures and body clearly how the soft clay had been folded or wrapped around the hole, this was also just below the top soil line. (Plate 1, Sk. 1). No. 4 pit revealed a fragment - mouth piece end - of an Indian clay "tube" pipe, quite bulky and crude. Found not far below top soil level. (Plate 1, Sk. 2).

TRADE PIPES

One fragment of a trade pipe bowl was found in top soil of pit 1, and a 3" piece of trade pipestem in top soil of pit 2.

BURIALS

No indication of human burials or remains were found.

WHITE MAN'S ARTIFACTS

No items of civilized culture were found below the cultivated soil level. The usual white man's refuse was found in and on the top soil, such things as pieces of agricultural machinery, brick bats, broken china, rusty nails, etc.

GENERAL

There are probably other refuse pits on this site, but they are difficult to find by probing due to the relatively few shells in mass accumulations.

It is the writer's present opinion that this site was once occupied by a fairly large family or tribe, but for only a few months or years, as indicated by the shallowness of the pits; and that many of the original refuse and fire pits extended no deeper than the modern cultivated soil depths, and therefore are now broken up and scattered by plow and disk over a wide area.

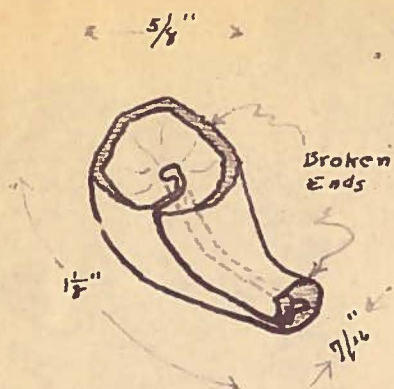
Further exploration of this site will be made if permission can be obtained when the field is again "in between crops", possibly using a trench method of exploration rather than trying to locate pits by probing.

A sketch map of the locations of pits Nos. 1 to 4 is attached. (Plate 5)

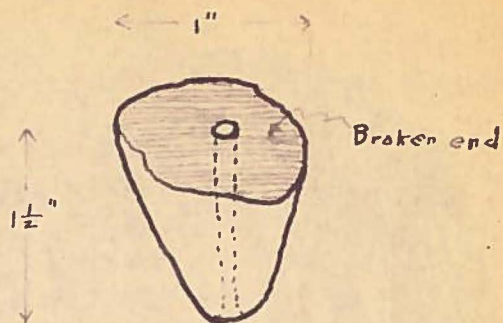
August 15, 1951

Sussex Archaeological Association

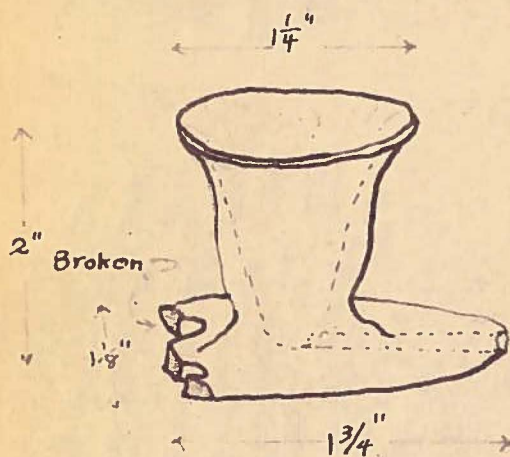
C. L. Bryant
R. C. Rosser
Helen Hutchinson
Henry H. Hutchinson



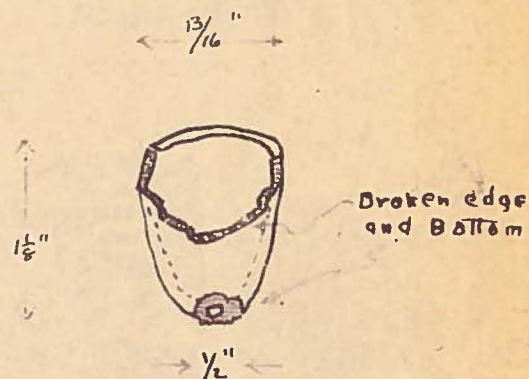
Sketch 1. "FOLDED" CLAY
ELBOW of PIPE



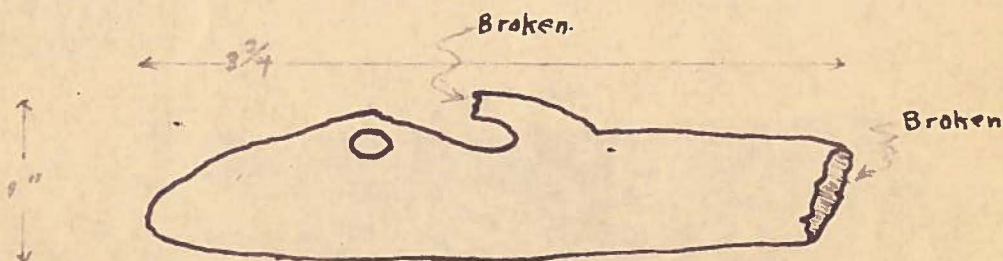
Sketch 2. FRAGMENT
of "TUBE" PIPE (Clay).



Sketch 3. "PLATFORM" PIPE
SOAPSTONE



Sketch 4. PIPE BOWL
CLAY. Very dark Color.



Sketch 5. Antler with hole
BONE IMPLEMENT.



Sketch 6.
Antler tine
Arrow Tip?

SURFACE FINDINGS AT THE WILLIN SITE

A marker erected by the Maryland State Roads Commission reads: "Rehoboth---Patented by Capt. John Lee of Virginia, 1673 for 2350 acres. It descended through the Lee family until 1787. Thomas Sim Lee, second Governor of Maryland, was descended from the Lees of Rehoboth." (This is in no way related to and should not be confused or in any way connected with Rehoboth, Delaware.)

The Zora Willin farm on which the Willin Site is located is a portion of this Lee tract.

For the past several years I have enjoyed the privilege of examining artifacts found by Mrs. Sara Breuil, who lives in the original Lee house, a beautiful brick home built in the early 18th Century and which contains one of the finest individual collections of firearms in America. These artifacts to which I have reference were found by Mrs. Breuil on her farm adjoining the Willin farm on the north. Articles of great interest are fragments of twelve different clay pipes, seven stems ranging from two to three inches in length, all of the same type clay characteristic of the pottery of this section. One stem is square tapered, the others round tapered, ranging from very crude to very fine work. A bowl of a large "tube" pipe is very interesting. Apparently it was in straight alignment similar to a modern cigar holder. There are two other fragments of similar pipes. A large percentage of a tiny pot that might easily have been mistaken by some unwary person for an English walnut hull measures $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter.

A fine example of a drilled pendant of slate, extreme length four inches, extreme width two inches.

There are several drilled creek pebbles in this collection, one oblong, two inches long, kidney shaped, which was doubtless drilled by human hands. Two others, however, are questionable.

Five celts ranging from two to six inches in length are made from ordinary creek stones characteristic of this locality.

Four grooved axes, one broken at the groove, are also of the general type found locally. However, one of these axes is exceptionally well made with an unusually deep groove. Of eighteen perfect arrow points examined, fourteen were triangular. They were all of the usual quartzite, slate, jasper, and granite.

Summarizing the entire surface findings I have seen at this site, it appears that artifacts found in this area are of the general nature of those found throughout the entire Marshyhope Watershed area which extends nearly to Felton, Delaware.

Charles L. Bryant