BULLETIN

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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C. A. WESLAGER, *Editor*—23 Champlain Ave., Wilmington, Del.

Meetings

Some months have elapsed since the publication of our last *Bulletin* during which the Society has sponsored a number of interesting lecture meetings. This has been our major activity during the present war period when the curtailment of gasoline has interfered with field work; and the shortage of paper has affected our publications.

One of the highlights of our lecture program was on May 19, 1944, when Dr. William N. Fenton, ethnologist of the U. S. Bureau of Ethnology discussed "Masked Medicine Societies of the Iroquois." At this meeting we were hosts to a number of graduate students from Dr. Frank G. Speck's classes in anthropology. This was Dr. Fenton's first appearance before our Society, and it was a privilege to welcome him to Delaware.

On February 17, 1945—a blustering winter night—Dr. Mary Butler Lewis lectured on "Two Lenni Lenape Rock Shelters on Darby Creek." Also present as guests of the Society were the non-professional archaeologists who worked at the sites, Dr. and Mrs. H. Albrecht, Mr. and Mrs. J. Frank Sterling, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Paul Delgrego and Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Yenney. The visitors brought with them representative artifacts uncovered at the two rock shelters which were exhibited for the benefit of our members. One of the shelters contained materials of white manufacture in association with native artifacts; the other was apparently prehistoric inasmuch as white contact materials were totally absent.

Most of our members are well acquainted with the general area where the shelters were located, near Broomall, Pennsylvania, and the meeting aroused considerable interest and discussion.

New Officers

Attention is called to the panel of officers appearing on the opposite page, as elected by the membership at the annual meeting. Professor H. Clay Reed was elected to the Board of Directors to succeed the late Dr. Walter Hullihen.

REFUSE PITS IN SINEPUXENT NECK
on the
EASTERN SHORE OF MARYLAND

By H. GEIGER OMWAKE

Any archaeological study of the State of Delaware must not limit itself to modern political boundary lines. Before the Berkleys, Calverts, Penns and their successors concluded limits for the three states which compose the Delmarva Peninsula, the entire area existed, as it does now, as a geographical unit. As a matter of fact, there was a certain ethnic unity as well, because the Algonkian tongue was common to the areas now designated as Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware, though there probably were dialectic differences.

In particular, eastern Sussex County, Delaware, cannot be studied as a unit separate from the rest of the peninsula to the south. Its native inhabitants, Assateagues, at least those of the protohistoric and early historic periods, are known to have migrated from Worcester County, Maryland, to Millsboro, Delaware, making at least two important stops on their way. William B. Marye's excellent article, published by the Archaeological Society of Delaware, provided the inspiration for the investigations of which this article constitutes a partial report.[1] Indeed the investigations have only begun. So much work remains that one might question the propriety of now making any report at all. In view of the amount of research yet undone which the area concerned requires, this paper will only attempt to present general observations and report modest progress.

The reader must bear in mind that Sinepuxent Neck was an area of early contact between Indians and whites. Undoubtedly the suitability of the region to the sustenance of life without extreme hardship caused it to be inhabited long before the white man intruded. Although in one or two instances some doubt remains, the refuse pits so far investigated seemingly were of the prehistoric period.

1. BUCKINGHAM

According to Marye,[2] the Assateague Indians proceeded to Delaware from their village at Buckingham which was located along Beaverdam Creek, east of Ironshire and south east of Berlin, Md. Its limits have not been defined, but at least a part of it lay along the southern bank of that creek. The writer was first taken to the site by Col. Harry Purnell of Berlin to whom the village had been known the greater part of his life and by whom it had been surface hunted many times. I was able to find mortars, hammerstones, an axe, broken pestles, arrowheads, a broken gorget, and pottery fragments in considerable numbers—all surface material.

Pit #1

Accompanied by Col. Purnell, C. A. Weslager, and Arch Crozier of the Archaeological Society af Delaware, the author and his son, H. G. Omwake, Jr., made a return reconnaissance last September. Probing resulted in the discovery of a refuse pit.

The top soil was removed and the pit was found to be circular, having a diameter of three feet. A trench was dug along the northern edge and the refuse removed so as to maintain a vertical face. At the center the depth was found to be three feet six inches. The pit was conical and resembled refuse pits excavated at Slaughter Creek by members of the Society.[3] There was a small quantity of charcoal throughout and much of the shell refuse gave evidence of having been burned.

Large natural-growth oyster shells constituted the bulk of the refuse. There were also a few clam shells.

Bone refuse was examined by Dr. Raymond M. Gilmore, Associate Curator, United States National Museum, and was reported to me as follows:

> "Nearly all are deer bones; no question of this. I have made comparison with cow and sheep, as well as deer, and all fit well the examples of deer. There are—two of a bird—turkey, I believe."

Cultural objects recovered consisted of one bone awl three inches in length, of the split and polished type, in good condition, a quantity of pottery fragments, all shell tempered, representing at least three vessels, one of which presumably had been mended while in use as demonstrated by the holes drilled through several sherds, and a few jastper chips. There were no objects of any sort which might be classified as "trade" items. The pit was typically prehistoric, and its purpose could not be determined. Its resemblance to pits at Slaughter Creek, identified by Davidson as refuse pits, suggests a cultural relationship.

II. SANDY POINT

Sandy Point is a small promontory which juts into Sinepuxent Bay about six miles below Ocean City, Maryland, and is no more than four miles, as the crow flies, east of the site at Buckingham described above. This writer is of the opinion that it is the site of the ancient tract granted to old Col. Francis Jenkins in 1678, the patents for which mention an "Indian field," and that it is the "Goshen" to which Makemie voyaged. If this is true, the site was the village of Queen Weocomoconus of the Assateague tribe and the interpreter Robin. This opinion is based on statements of Dr. L. P. Bowen in his book *In the Days of Makemie* and is subject to alteration or verification since Bowen was not a trained ethnologist. It may be of significance that Dr. Zadok P. Henry of Berlin, Md., who has spent his life on Sinepuxent Neck has told the writer that "Goshen" included this area. As will be subsequently found, the pits investigated seemed to have been purely prehistoric. Dr. Henry has suggested (orally December 3, 1944) that "Goshen" extended several miles northward along the bay and that the area inhabited in the contact days of preacher Makemie may have been north of the section presently under investigation. Future explorations and excavations may either prove or disprove this suggestion.

Pit #1

In the spring of 1944 Col. Purnell took Arch Crozier and the writer to inspect the site known locally as Green Point of Sandy Point. While the two men were walking over the fields, the writer explored the shore line and came upon several pieces of pottery protruding from a lump of earth which had broken away from a slight bank at the northern end of the site. Fur-

ther investigation produced two dozen fragments of what had been a large clay vessel. It was very crude ware, tempered with coarse grains of crushed quartzite, and bore a well worn basket weave impression on its outer surface. The inner face had been smoothed by rubbing a rough implement in a vertical motion from the bottom to the top. The fragments varied from three-eighths to a half-inch in thickness and all gave the impression of great age and crudity. Subsequent digging at the spot, which has been designated Sandy Point Pit #1, although it was not a true refuse pit, produced a few additional fragments, but not of sufficient size or numbers to make restoration possible.

No true refuse pit existed in the bank. There was a layer of shell debris varying from nothing to a foot in depth extending along the bank for a distance of thirty feet. Digging in this covering layer produced no other objects. The only conclusion seemingly tenable is that the vessel—which bears mending holes—had been placed in the ground perhaps for storage purposes, that storms had broken the bank away, and that most of the pot had been carried out into the bay. There was nothing except the crudeness of the piece to indicate that it belonged to the prehistoric period, nor was there any reason to attribute it to the contact period. It should be pointed out that all other pottery fragments, either found on the surface or excavated from this site, are shell tempered. Perhaps this is only an indication that this particular vessel had been brought from elsewhere and not made on the spot, where, incidentally, there is almost no stone at all which might have served as tempering material.

Pit #2

Investigation of this refuse pit was made by C. A. Weslager, Arch Crozier, H. G. Omwake, Jr., and myself. The deposit was found by probing. A portion of the top soil was removed and a working trench dug along the north-eastern edge. Refuse was removed in horizontal layers and a clean vertical face was maintained. The pit was oval in shape and had a short diameter of six feet. Subsequent investigation determined the long diameter to have been nine feet. The deposit of shells was two feet six inches thick. The sides of the pit were oblique. Beneath the shell deposit was an area of disturbed earth containing particles of charcoal which extended four feet deep. Because the pit was unproductive of pottery or implements, excavation was not completed and the ultimate depth remains undetermined.

Refuse consisted principally of large clam shells. There were a few oysters and mollusks (*Area Ponderosa* (Say)—a living marine type of our waters—identified by Dr. H. A. Pilsbry, Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia).

Identifiable bone refuse consisted of a fragment of carapace, probably box tortoise, and fish jaw fragments, possibly croaker, identified by Dr. H. W. Fowler, Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia.

There were some charcoal throughout and the shells bore evidence of having been in or near fire.

Manufactured objects consisted of a dozen very small pottery fragments, all shell tempered, none incised, all bearing cob-like markings on the exterior. There were a three and one-quarter inch long section of a flat bone bodkin, a three inch long bone flaking tool the point of which had evi-

dently been purposely cut off, and two fragments of split bone, polished on the inner surface. No other objects were found. There was nothing to indicate that the pit was of other than the prehistoric period, but in view of the fact that it was only partially excavated it cannot definitely be assigned to that period.

Pit #3

Within thirty feet of Pit #2 my son and I, assisted by Miss Marian Satterwhite, an art supervisor in the Delaware schools, found and excavated a refuse pit of generally circular outline, seven and a half feet in diameter. It had a maximum depth of two feet six inches. Beneath the shell deposit was a layer of disturbed sandy earth three inches thick imposed on a double tier of inverted clam shells. The pit was shaped like a pie pan with slightly oblique walls and a flat bottom. Without doubt the double tier of clam shells had been purposely and carefully placed in the bottom as a lining for the pit. The disturbed earth imposed on them bore much charcoal and evidence of fire.

At the northwest edge was a post mould twelve inches in diameter and twenty-eight inches deep. The mould had a pointed bottom and was on an angle, just off the vertical, slanted toward the south. Extending from it into the shell deposit for an indeterminable distance was a branch mould three inches in diameter, suggesting that the main post had been so planted that the branch would form a spit over a fire in the pit.

Refuse consisted for the most part, of clam shells. There were a few oyster shells and dozens of mollusks identified by Dr. Pilsbry as *Anguispira alternata* (Say) and *Triodopsis albolabris* (Say), both living land snails common in this area.

Animal refuse was represented by turtle bones, at least a part of box tortoise, identified by Dr. Fowler, teeth of Virginia deer, three incomplete madibular rami, teeth, and the penis bone of a raccoon. Also "many bone fragments, some of which *might* be deer parts but little is sufficiently complete to be certain. A light weight cow might be responsible for some of these." There were also spines of Gaff-topsail catfish, determined by Dr. Fowler. There was one small antler tine.

Manufactured goods consisted of two small and badly broken awl points and a large number of pottery fragments representing at least nine different vessels. All sherds were tempered with pulverized shell. Thickness varied from an eighth to slightly over a quarter inch. There were three distinct basal sherds which indicated that the vessels had rounded bottoms. Two rim sherds were undecorated, but of different vessels. One rim sherd bore an incised chevron design of at least nine horizontal and seven obliquely cut lines, sharply incised. Another rim sherd had an inverted triangle design with the space inside and between the main outlines filled with a series of three short horizontal lines beneath nine, short, slightly oblique ones. The rim of this sherd was the only one slightly everted. One large rim sherd bore four parallel lines running around a slightly constricted neck about one-quarter inch apart. These lines may have been impressed by tying twisted reeds around the vessel. The sherd also bore a mending hole. One very small rim sherd bore a similar decoration except that only three lines are discernible and they are only an eighth of an inch apart. If one were to take a piece of string and twist it tightly almost to the point of kinking and then impress it into soft clay, the result would bear a striking

resemblance to the lines on these sherds. Perhaps a long slender green reed or twisted grass would produce the same results.

One other sherd of a vessel, whose rim diameter was apparently between four and five inches and which was shaped like a soup bowl, bore eight twisted cord impressions which ran horizontally about the rim about one-eighth inch apart and were cut obliquely by three closely spaced similar lines. The final rim sherd bore two parallel lines made by a twisted cord, the first being three-eighths of an inch below the rim, the second a quarter inch lower. The space between the rim and the top line was interrupted by a series of closely spaced vertical marks which had been pushed into the soft clay by some rough instrument, perhaps a twig whose bark had not been removed.

There were also one small jasper flake, a chipped jasper pebble and one small unworked stone. There were absolutely no articles of white man's manufacture, but at a depth of two feet were found three peach stones. Since peaches were not native to America and their depth almost certainly precluded the possibility of the stones being intrusive, it might be inferred that the Indians who used this pit had had some contact, direct or otherwise, with white men.

These three peach stones were submitted to Dr. F. W. Pennell, Curator of Botany at the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences. After examining them he wrote the following memorandum:

> "The small size of these stones, and probably also their moderate roughening suggests that they are of some early variety of peach. When in this country about 1750 the Swedish botanist Kalm records the Indian tradition that southward and westward peaches had existed from time immemorial, good evidence that they must have been grown by the Indians from stock obtained from the Spanish several centuries earlier."

In passing it would be well to call attention to a statement of D. H. Landis:[4]

> "William Penn also described the Indian peach orchards, which were here on his arrival in 1682 and which they received from the Swedes."

Reference to the *Delaware Tercentenary Almanack,* published in December, 1937, by the Delaware Tercentenary Commission, reminds us that the Swedes first came to these shores in 1637.

Another interesting reference to peaches in America is found in *Facts of a Family,* a mimeographed geneology of the Robins family of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, prepared and distributed to members of the Robins family, and to other family groups related through marriage and descent, by the present Thomas Robins of New York City. Under the title *"The Genesis of the Rosy-Cheeked Peach,"* he wrote:

> "There is an interesting story of the introduction of the peach into America more than two hundred years ago. About three miles from Easton there is an estate called Peach Blossom, which is at the head of a creek of the same name. It was the seat ot the historical Robins family, who came from England and took that estate when Maryland was very young. The direct descendants

of the first Robins of Maryland live now in Philadelphia. The surname no longer exists in Talbot county, though it appears in the Christian names of members of the Goldsborough, Hollyday, and other families. One of the family, Thomas Robins, was a great traveler and roamed all over the accessible regions of the world. In Persia he found the peach, a fruit then unknown in England and America, and brought to Maryland with him some peachstones which he planted on the estate his brother had settled upon. When the trees blossomed, the flowers were so much admired that the name of the estate was changed from Arcadia to Peach Blossom. If there ever was a time when this story was not believed it is so far back in the past as not to be located. A stone tablet on the Peach Blossom estate once gave the date of the planting of the peach stones, but it has disappeared in the general wrack and ruin of the place, whose glories have departed many, many years ago."

This story is a pleasant diversion, and may possibly be only family tradition and lacking in historical proof. It is cited here because the date of the arrival of the Robins family on the Eastern Shore may be significant. The same source which gives us the rosy cheeked peach story states that Obedience and Edward Robins came to this country about Christmas time in 1620. Edward became a merchant and his history became lost. Obedience first settled near Jamestown, Va., but finding malaria ravaging the population, soon moved to the Eastern Shore where he became a large property owner and as early as 1629 served in the House of Burgesses from Accomack County.

The first Thomas Robins, the son of John Robins and grandson of Obedience, was born in 1677, and at an early age inherited Chincoteague Island. He had a brother John, who was also holder of extensive lands on the Eastern Shore, and may be the Thomas Robins referred to in the peach story. There is no evidence to indicate that he was a traveller, and his death occurred in 1717. It is obvious, therefore, that if he brought peaches to the Eastern Shore, he did so about the turn of the century. By that time the Indians had been in contact with the whites for three quarters of a century and the refuse pit containing the peach stones should also have held articles of trade, which it did not. It seems, therefore, that the memorandum of Dr. Pennell is more likely to contain the true story of the peach stones. In other words, it is possible that peaches were growing on the Eastern Shore when English traders first appeared in the region even though the tree was not indigenous to this area. We must remember that the contact between Indians and Spaniards in the south preceded contact on the Delmarva Peninsula by almost a century, and Spanish influences may have diffused to northern tribes.

Pit #4

Along the southern edge of Sandy Point site the bank makes a gentle concavity northward. Near the apex of the indentation the bay greatly eroded the bank in the course of the years. Here and there are evidences that refuse pits had once existed along the edge. Early in November of 1944 Roger Vandergrift, a member of the Archaeological Society of Delaware and resident of Ocean View, Delaware, and the writer explored the remains of a pit of which more seemed to remain than of the others. The remnants were two feet six inches in width, one foot eight inches in depth, and extended into the bank slightly more than a foot.

Shell refuse consisted of clam, oyster, and several broken conch shells.

Animal bone refuse included a fragment of the right premaxilla and maxilla with one canine tooth of the common skunk and two thin bones of a painted turtle (probably *Chrysemys picta*) carapace. Dr. T. D. Stewart, Curator, Division of Physical Anthropology, United States National Museum, Washington, D. C., provided the above identifications which were made by his associates in Mammalogy.

There were also part of a human skull and a few odd bone fragments in the pit. Again the bay must be blamed for having destroyed the complete burial. These bones were examined by Dr. Stewart and his report is quoted:

> "The human bones in your shipment consist of a nearly complete right parietal, a portion of mastoid process from a left temporal, two fragments of frontal bone and a fragment of long bone. Using a skull from California chosen at random because of similarity in size, I proceeded to mark both on the skull and the isolated parietal a vertical line in the coronal plane and another at right angles and parallel to the Frankfort plane. With the aid of a stereograph I was able to record the curvature along these lines. Figures showing the superposition of curves from three specimens are enclosed herewith. You will note that your parietal has a much greater curvature in both directions. This would seem to indicate that the skull was rounder-headed or more brachycranic than the average for Algonquins. Judging from the sutures this individual was a young adult. The sex would be only a guess.
>
> "There is one other interesting specimen, and that is the fragment of long bone. This fragment is too small to give any indication of the bone from which it came. It is interesting, however, that the surface shows a marked degree of periostitis. This is the type of bone reaction that we look upon as being due to syphilis. Not having the whole bone or better the whole skeleton, I cannot make a positive identification."

Cultural objects consisted of two small pottery sherds, both a light brown in color, one having a smooth exterior and tempered with pulverized shells, the other having a rough exterior and tempered with perishable material which had completely disintegrated. Both fragments were a quarter inch in thickness. There was absolutely no trace of any objects manufactured by white men and what remained of the pit might correctly be classed as prehistoric. Of course, there remains some doubt because the larger part had been destroyed by the waters of the bay.

Pit #5

Perhaps the most interesting refuse pit of all was located by Roger Vandergrift, the writer and his son, very near Pits #2 and #3. These pits formed an approximately isosceles triangle the base of which paralleled the bank about seventy-five feet inland, the sides of which were about thirty feet long.

The top soil was removed and the deposit found to have east-west and north-south diameters of five and six feet. A trench was dug along the northern edge and the refuse carefully removed in layers so that a clean

vertical face was maintained. The bottom of the pit was found to be elliptical with a gradually curving slope to the east and a more abrupt wall to the west. Total depth of the shell deposit at the center was twenty-six inches.

On the northwestern side of the pit was found the skeleton of a dog. This was carefully uncovered. It was noted that the feet were placed to point northward and the head northwestward. The bottom of the head was twenty inches below soil level. The pelvis lay directly under the center of the pit. There were shells beneath the forward vertebrae, chest, and head. The skeleton was measured as accurately as possible and found to be thirty-three inches long from pelvis to nose and seventeen inches from toes to shoulder.

Excavation was stopped and a professional photographer summoned to take pictures. After the photographer had left and while I was removing the rear leg bones, my son, who was working on the southwestern side of the pit, came upon a deposit of toe bones. Careful examination brought to light a second dog, of a size approximate to the first, which lay two feet to the south. This animal had no head. The neck vertebrae were twenty-four inches below soil level and the posterior parts lay at a depth of thirty inches and were underneath the center of the pit. The left lower jaw was six inches from the neck vertebrae at a depth of twenty-six inches and the right lower jaw was later found twenty inches to the south at a depth of twenty-seven inches. It was obvious that this animal had been mutilated before being placed in the pit, for the contents had not been previously disturbed.

Dog remains from Pit #5 at Sandy Point. See tables at the end of the article for measurements.

Photographs of the two animals were taken with a small camera. The light in the pit was very poor, and although the shutter was properly adjusted the pictures did not register on the film.

Although the bones of these dogs were permitted to dry out before being removed, they were very fragile. It was possible to salvage the complete skull of the first animal, many of the long bones and most of the vertebrae of both. The lower jaw bones of the second dog were in good condition. All were gathered together, cleaned, and shipped to Dr. Stewart for study and herewith is quoted his report:

> "The two dog skeletons are of special interest since little is known of the native Indian dog before it became admixed with European varieties. The whole subject has been discussed by G. M. Allen (*Dogs of the American Aborigines;* Bull. Comp. Zool., Harard, Vol. 63, 1920, p. 432). In view of the scarcity of data on the Indian dog, it would be a good idea, if possible, to put on record a few measurements relating to your finds. To this end I have prepared two tables of comparative measurements. If you will refer to Judge Graham's publication on Indians of Port Tobacco, Maryland, you will find on page 26 a statement regarding a dog which he excavated. This was definitely a smaller dog than the ones you have found. I would characterize yours as the larger, or common, Indian dog described by Allen on page 457, yet the long bones of your dogs are smaller."

I have given Dr. Stewart's full statement because in it are suggested sources of information useful to any readers who might sometime come upon dog burials. The tables he prepared show comparisons with dogs excavated near Rehoboth, Del., by himself and C. A. Weslager of the Archaeological Society of Delaware,[5] and dogs recovered by Allen in Maine.

The shell beneath the shell deposit was examined very carefully because we expected to find the master buried with his dogs. No human remains were encountered. There was a layer of disturbed earth seven inches thick, under which lay three inches of oyster and clam shells randomly deposited. Beneath these shells was disturbed earth for a depth of fourteen inches. Both disturbed layers were absolutely sterile of shell, bone, pottery, or other goods but contained large quantities of charcoal to the maximum depth. At the bottom of the pit was a double layer of clam shells, carefully placed, round side up, covering the entire floor which was absolutely flat. The walls of this part of the pit were vertical. If the reader will imagine for himself an inverted stove pipe hat with the brim rounded upward instead of flat he will have a fairly accurate idea of the shape of the pit. The east-west diameter of the flat bottom was three feet nine inches and the north-south diameter four feet five inches.

In the upper deposit, shell refuse consisted of clams, a few oysters, some land and marine shells.

Bone remains represented Virginia white tailed deer, one old and one young black bear, large snapping turtle, marine catfish, and an unidentified species of bird.

Thirteen fragments of pottery were recovered, representing at least five vessels. All were tempered and none were incised. Three fragments were reddish in color, two almost black, and the rest a dirty brown. One very small sherd was three-sixteenths of an inch thick, the others ranging from a quarter to three-eighths of an inch.

There were two small brown jasper chips, a pointed fragment of bone awl three-quarters of an inch long, and a two inch section of leg bone of a bird, cut lengthwise thru the knee joint, the cut edges having been subsequently polished.

No traces of objects of white manufacture were found and the pit may

be properly classed as prehistoric. Certainly it was the most interesting of all those found at Sandy Point.

Some other notes regarding this site gathered by the writer are also of interest.

Following the great storm of August, 1933, Col. Harry Purnell and some friends, found and excavated the skeleton of a baby, exposed in the bank on the same site. Prior to that time Mr. Ethan Allen Carey, at present and a life-long resident of Sinepuxent Neck, accompanied by Dr. Ed J. Derrickson, Mr. James B. Derrickson, two boys, Lev and Ned Derrickson, and three young Kennard brothers of Baltimore, found exposed in the bank great numbers of human bones and skulls, some seventy-five feet from our pits #3 and #5. So far as Mr. Carey observed, there was no particular order about their deposit and it seems likely that some previous storm had washed out an ossuary. According to Mr. Carey there were about forty skulls found, but none of them was preserved.

It was the custom of the Assateagues to place the bones of the departed in a Chiacason house pending ceremonial burial in a large pit. This custom has been noted elsewhere in the peninsula and has been well described by C. A. Weslager in his recent book, *Delaware's Buried Past*. Here we apparently have archaeological proof of the custom being practiced by the occupants of the site.

The writer expressed the opinion at the beginning of this report that this site at Sandy Point may have been the ancient village of Queen Weocomoconus. If this is true, refuse pits containing trade objects should be found. The site is very extensive, covering many acres, and will bear thorough investigation in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

The area known today as Sinepuxent Neck has been *terra incognita* from the viewpoint of the archaeologist until recently. Our work to date may be described as "sampling" two of the larger sites that have been located; namely "Buckingham" the historically documented residence of the Assateague tribe; and "Sandy Point" which may be the site of another Assateague village cited in historical records—the town of Queen Weocomoconus.

Our work has principally been devoted to the excavation of pits on the two sites which have produced a variety of artifacts and pottery; human remains; dog remains; shell detritus and animal and vegetable refuse. To date no materials of European manufacture have been found *in situ* with native materials, leading us to conclude tentatively that both sites were occupied before the coming of white men to the region.

All of the cultural materials uncovered fall under the broad classification of the Coastal Aspect of the Woodland Pattern and are identical with material excavated at Slaughter Creek, Rehoboth, Lewes, and elsewhere in southern Delaware.[6]

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1. William B. Marye, *Indian Town of the Southeastern Part of Sussex County, Del.*, Archaeological Society of Delaware, March 15, 1940.
2. Marye, op. cit., p. 2.
3. D. S. Davidson, *Notes on Slaughter Creek*, Bulletin, Archaeological Society of Delaware, Vol. 2, No. 2, October, 1935, pp. 1-5.
4. *A Brief Description of Indian Life and Indian Trade of the Susquehannock Indians*, Lancaster, Pa., *New Era and Intelligencer Journal*, June 22, 1929.
5. C. A. Weslager, *Delaware's Buried Past*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944, p. 86.
6. Acknowledgement is made to Arthur G. Volkman for typing the MSS and assisting in its arrangement.

INDIAN DOG SKELETONS

Observation	Sandy Point, Md. No. 1	Sandy Point, Md. No. 2			Rehoboth, Del. No. 1	Rehoboth, Del. No. 2	Range of 9 specimens (Allen, '20)*	
Humerus:								
Max. length	—	147.5(L)	143.5(R),	143.5(L)	137(R),	—	—	162-168
Breadth prox. end	37.5(R),	38(L)	36(R),	36(L)	33(R),	—	—	?
" dist. "	30 (R),	31(L)	29(R),	29(L)	27(R),	27(L)	—	?
Radius:								
Max. length		—	144(R),	143(L)	132(R),	132(L)	144(R), 143(L)	163-164
Ulna:								
Max. length		—	166(R),	—		—	—	?
Femur:								
Max. length		—	155(R),	156(L)		—	— 153(L)	170-173
Breadth prox. end		—	34(R),	34(L)		—	— 33(L)	?
" dist. "	29 (R),	29(L)	29(R),	29(L)		—	—	?
Tibia:								
Max. length		—	156(R),	155(L)		—	—	156-177
Breadth prox. end		—	31(R),	31(L)		—	—	?
" dist. end		—	20(R),	20(L)		—	—	?

* Not more than 4 specimens for any one bone.

INDIAN DOG SKULLS **

Observation	Sandy Point, Md. No. 1		Sandy Point, Md. No. 2		Rehoboth, Del. No. 1		Rehoboth, Del. No. 2		Range of 9 specimens (Allen, '20)*
Alveolus of i^1 to m^2	92(R),	92(L)	—		89(R)	—	—		83-96
" " i_1 to m_3	—	93(L)	—			—	—		87-105*
" " c to m^2	76(R),	75.5(L)	—		73(R),	—	—		70-86
" " c to m_3	86(R),	87(L)	—	84(L)	84(R)	—	—		92-99*
Crown length of m^4	18(R),	18(L)		—	18(R)	—	18.5(R),	18(L)	17.5-20.5
" " " m_1	21(R),	21(L)	20(R),	20(L)	20(R),	—	20.5(R),	20(L)	21-24*
" " " m^{1-2}		—		—	20(R),	—	20.5(R),	20(L)	16.3-20.8
" " " m_{1-3}	34(R),	34(L)	—	31(L)	32(R),	—	—	32(L)	33.5-39*
Max. width of tooth row at pm^4 (alvolar)	60			—	—		—		?
Max. width of tooth row at upper c (alv.)	34.5			—	—		—		?
Number of upper pm's	4(R),	4(L)		—	4(R)	—	—		?
" " lower pm's	4(R),	3(L)	4(R),	4(L)	3(R)	—	—		?

* Based upon a series of 7 lower jaws mostly from Maine shell-heaps.

** This table and the one on page 12 prepared by T. Dale Stewart.

NANTICOKES AND THE BUZZARD SONG

By C. A. WESLAGER

One Saturday morning last fall four of us left Wilmington for a week-end trip to Indian River Hundred to visit our Nanticoke Indian friends—the last survivors of Delaware's native peoples. Three of us Lloyd Carr, L. T. Alexander and I—were young in ethnological experience, but our senior companion, Professor Frank G. Speck, had within him the memories of hundreds of similar excursions to Indian communities from the Carolinas to Canada. We three novitiates chatted on about this and that as we drove through the level countryside, but Speck said very little. He breathed deeply of the clean Sussex air that poured in through the open car windows, and his eyes took in the full view of fields and pine woods with the ever-present buzzards hovering overhead. Probably there was something about the white, sandy fields that reminded Speck of his sojourns in tidewater Virginia, or perhaps it was the buzzards wheeling over the fields of corn stubble. Anyhow, he was reminded of a song, and he started to sing it. The words were as follows:

Is Jerry dead
Oh yes
Is Jerry dead
Oh yes
Is his eyes out
Oh no
Is his eyes out
Oh no
Plinka, plinka mo' meat
Plinka, plinka mo' meat
Plinka, plinka mo' meat
S-s-s-s-s-sock 'im, s-s-s-s-s-sock 'im

The tune was catchy, and when the words were vocalized they had a rhythm that can not be conveyed by setting them down on paper. We coaxed him to teach the song to us, and he obliged. Within a few minutes we knew it by heart. We then rendered it in foursome as we rode along, Speck singing the first, third, fifth and seventh lines while we joined in with the "oh yes" and "oh no" like the robust chorus in a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta. Finally, our four voices were joined in unison on the last four lines. At this point, the reader is urged to reread the words of the song so that he will be prepared for what is to follow.

The song was an old-time plantation ditty, Speck told us, and it had been taught to him many years ago by Chief Otho Nelson of the Rappahannock tribe of Virginia. He said that the Rappahannocks had often sung it as a social song, the leader, shuffling his feet, his back bent over, his arms moving up and down in imitation of the flapping wings of a *turkey buzzard*. We picked up our ears at this mention of a buzzard. This was our first intimation that this song was in anyway related to a buzzard. Speck was nonplussed. Hadn't we gathered from the words that it was a song about buzzards? We had to admit that the words were absolutely meaningless to us. We had sung them as nonsense phrases merely because they caught our ear fancy. How did we know they had anything to do with buzzards?

It was difficult for Speck to believe that we were so naive that we

hadn't understood the meaning of the song. We asked rather sheepishly that he explain it to us and he did. Jerry, he said, was a mule, of course. The song represented a dialogue between several old buzzards who stood contemplating Jerry's dead carcass in the field, its eyes open in death. "Is Jerry dead?" asked the first bird. "Oh, yes," replied the second. "Is his eyes out?" The answer being in the negative, the first buzzard immediately attacked the carcass to the song of "more meat" and promptly pecked out the mule's eyes. This last gesture was represented by the final onomatapoetic words, "ssssss-sock 'im, sssssss-sock 'im."

"It's a little on the morbid side," one of us said as the words of the song were explained. Although we knew little about buzzards, we had never thought of them as the most beautiful of Delaware birds, and the macabre scene of two black-feathered scavengers feasting on a dead mule, after first destroying his optical organs was not too pleasant. Nevertheless, by the time we had arrived at our destination we had sung the ditty dozens of times. It stayed on our tongues despite ourselves. Speck was tired of hearing it, and doubtless regretted that he had brought it up. Indulgently, he said nothing. That night Alexander and I were guests in the home of Lincoln Harmon, a hospitable Nanticoke Counsellor, and his wife Patience, Secretary of the Nanticoke Indian Association. Our companions remained overnight in the home of Oscar Wright and his wife Winona, formerly the teacher in the Indian school. We sang the song to our hosts and taught it to Joan and Ida, Lincoln Harmon's two little daughters. The next day we made the rounds of the community, Speck seeking an informant who could weave an eel pot, and we had occasion to sing the song at various homes where it had never been heard before. The reception was the same everywhere as that given by Elwood Wright, one of the tribal patriarchs.

"We want to sing you a new song, Elwood," we said, and then we went into our performance whch was now smooth from the previous rehearsals. Speck played the part of the buzzard, shuffling his feet and flapping his arms, while we stood around him, singing the chorus part of his solo. When we had finished Elwood laughed uproariously. Carrie, his wife, smothered her laughter behind her apron. The song tickled their funny bones. The Indian response was entirely different from our own. They needed no explanation of its meaning. The song meant something to them. It wasn't morbid or distasteful, but it was a funny song, a rib-tickler. The buzzard is as much a part of their natural environment as the pine "sheds" in the woods. They know its habits as well as their own, and the song caricatured these familiar habits.

To Elwood Wright our song suggested an old Indian buzzard story which had been handed down from the past. It seems that a crow (who likes to play jokes on the buzzard) was standing on one foot in an old persimmon tree watching a hound dog who lay sleeping below. A buzzard, attracted by the still form of the dog, flew down on the limb beside the crow. The crow cocked his eye at the dog, and with a meaningful gesture to the buzzard whispered, "Dead, dead." With this assurance, the buzzard spread his wings, and sailed down beside the dog. He surveyed his ostensibly dead prey, and opened his mouth and took a bite. The dog leaped into the air with a loud, piercing yelp that almost frightened the buzzard to death. The buzzard took to the air crying, "Thought he was dead, thought he was dead." And the crow had a good laugh at the joke he had played as the big bird flew away.

Our buzzard song also brought to light new buzzard-lore that was entirely unfamiliar to us, but is deeply rooted in the Nanticoke folkways. Thus, a simple ditty was the means of our obtaining some interesting items in the birdlore of the community. For example, we learned that buzzards, like fishhawks, are never molested by the Nanticokes. To frighten them or injure them in any way is forbidden by a custom older than the oldest living Indian. They recognize the bird as a useful scavenger who fills a needed place in nature's scheme by keeping the land undefiled by rotting flesh and carrion, thus minimizing the spread of disease. One of the Nanticoke poultry raisers told us that when any of his biddies succumbs to the dread "coxxy," which often takes ten or twenty chickens in a single night, he carries the dead ones to the meadow where the buzzards can eat them. Old Noah Harmon—who died not long after our visit—never passed a dead rabbit killed by a passing car without kicking it to the side of the road. That was so the buzzards could get the carcass without exposing themselves to the danger of passing cars.

Some of the Nanticokes believe that the buzzards recognize a priority system among themselves. The first bird to find a dead animal is the possessor of the flesh. The others must not deprive him of his rights. Sometimes when they try to edge in while he is feasting, the bird-owner will chase them away until he is ready to share with them.

On the question of why the buzzard usually pecks out the eyes of his dead prey first, the Nanticokes are well agreed. The answer is elementary to them: "The buzzard doesn't like to eat an animal while the animal is watching itself being devoured. So he eats the eyes first, and the carrion can't see what is going on." Others say the buzzard is finicky about being watched by a pair of glassy eyes.

The mystery of how the buzzard locates his food has several explanations. It is well established that dead flesh will bring buzzards with surprising alacrity—often within five or ten minutes. The most popular belief is that the bird "winds" a dead animal. In other words, the wind brings the scent to him. One of the Indians told us that the buzzard always flies into the wind, better enabling him to get the scent for miles around.

The buzzard always prays before he eats. This belief is known to practically all the Indians, and arises from the characteristic posture of the buzzard. As he surveys his carrion from a fence post or tree limb, he sits with shoulders hunched, wings drawn tight against his body, and head bowed. He is "saying a blessing over the food" of which he will shortly partake.

During the winter, when earth food is scarce, the buzzard often obtains his food by swallowing air, according to the Nanticokes. He flies high up in the clouds and circles around with his mouth open. That satisfies his appetite.

When a heavy snow has fallen, a gust of wind may assist the buzzard by blowing a patch of earth clear of snow to reveal food. Unfortunately, the bird has difficulty controlling his flight, for the wind may carry him beyond the place of his intended landing. Therefore, he eats pebbles which gives him added weight, thus enabling him to land and hold his position even in a fierce gale.

The Nanticokes say that the buzzard lays two eggs, one is speckled

and the other is white. When the baby buzzards are hatched they are as white as snow and turn black as they grow older. The nest is on the ground, deep in the woods, usually alongside a dead tree. If you approach the nest, the mother buzzard will hiss like a snake to frighten you away. If you persist in approaching, she will vomit at you. This raises such a stench that you dare not come any closer.

You never see a buzzard carrying any food, either in its mouth or its talons. They say this is because it swallows its food, and then regurgitates when it reaches the nest. One Nanticoke farmer said that he once saw an eagle pursuing a buzzard in mid-air. The buzzard regurgitated, and the eagle ate it.

Further inquiry would doubtless uncover additional items in the buzzard lore, for the Nanticoke descendants, as Dr. Speck has frequently repeated, are still a rich source of folkloristic data. It was the simple buzzard song that opened up the new vista for us, and which, incidentally, gave us a different perspective on the diverging views of modern white people versus those of the Indian descendants. In our cultural pattern, the buzzard is entirely insignificant serving no useful purpose. We were uninformed in its habits to the point of not even being able to recognize the humor of a folk ditty inspired by the bird. To the Nanticokes, however, the song had meaning, and the flocks of buzzards seen constantly weaving above the pine forests along Indian River have a place in their scheme of things, as they did among the Indians long before the coming of the white men.

THE MEMORIAL BRUSH HEAP IN DELAWARE AND ELSEWHERE

By FRANK G. SPECK

It does not happen very often that the domain of archaeology projects itself in unquestionable form into that of living cultures. The life habits of people of several centuries ago so succumbed to changes due to association with European and other groups, that in eastern North America hardly a trace of original Indian practices came under the curtain that fell over the scene at the end of the 18th century. This is especially true of the Delmarva peninsula. With the evacuation of the native populations from the region by 1750 the few Indians who remained on the land forsook native ways and adopted those of their bearded, blue-eyed conquerors. However, some aboriginal practices have survived, one of which is universal among Algonkian peoples of the Atlantic Slope area from the St. Lawrence to the Carolinas. It has persisted in southern Delaware down to within the memory of living observers. The discovery of evidence upon which this declaration is based comes thru correspondence volunteered by Mr. J. Barton Cheyney, of Wilmington, Del. His attention was drawn to the problems of early Delaware history by the recent publications which have evoked considerable interest throughout the state in matters of racial relationship, linking the past with the present. Mr. Cheyney, therefore, deserves recognition for having disclosed a significant tradition in Sussex County. In doing this he has added an item to the small fund of knowledge

that we possess of the procedures of the aborigines, which came down to the colonial forebears. This habit of the Red Men has persisted, and, sanctioned by the dignity of antiquity, engendered strong convictions in the minds of those who dwelt in precincts hallowed by legends of people and places echoing the mysterious events of the past.

We can best approach the subject to be treated by quoting part of Mr. Cheyney's letter, addressed to me in 1942, in which he places upon record the evidence for the existence in Delaware of memorial markers in the form of heaps of brush or other matter, at localities where tragic events have been thought to occur. Although the accumulations forming the heaps were maintained in late times by white people of the countryside, they are reminiscent of an Indian custom common to practically all the tribes related by language and institutions to the former so-called Nanticoke inhabitants of the peninsula.

Here is the letter:

Dr. Frank G. Speck,

University of Pennsylvania.

My Dear Sir:

I suppose that you have been informed of the Indian Brush Pile that long stood in Dagsboro hundred on the Burton plantation until destroyed, as it stood in the way of the Delaware Railroad (in the fifties). The story was originally told to me by the late Daniel Burton who had it from his father, both old men. I have no doubt of the authenticity of the incident which followed the murder of an Indian in Delaware. Mr. Burton, who died several years ago, far in the nineties, recalled seeing the brush pile as a boy. It recalled the story that an Indian had been killed by a white native over a drink of whiskey. The dead Indian was not regarded with much pride by the old Sussex settlers who established and maintained the Brush Heap for more than a century.

I am trying to ascertain if the pile was a monument to the dead Red Man—a memorial—or it might have been a bar to the activities of Witches—*who might have come to avenge his death* [italics mine]. There were many believers in the "dark sciences" in Delaware in those times—perhaps 200 years ago. I also have made prolonged research in the books of writers on Indian themes to further ascertain if Brush Heaps were set up generally or even sparsely if at all in memory of an Indian or if they were erected by the superstitious folks against evil spirits.

I perhaps would not have pursued the inquiry had not Mr. Burton, my informant, been entirely reliable and possessed of a remarkable memory which I have never found at fault.

If you can give me any light on the matter I should like to clarify in print the objective of the Brush Heap to the many doubters, for I wrote the original or first story of it.

I am,

Respectfully yours,

/s/ J. BARTON CHEYNEY

This communication is interesting. The writer's suggestions concerning the purpose and mystical beliefs associated with it in the lore of the district cover much of the series of traditions that cluster about the same "heaps," whether of brush or of stones, in other parts of the eastern area.

Historians and ethnologists treating the Indian customs of the New England and Middle Atlantic states, have seldom failed to find in some localities the remains of heaps of accumulated material placed at the side of a trail or pathway, where those who pass by throw something on the pile, until in the course of time it assumes the proportions of a small monument commemorating some legendary occurrence. Often indeed the occurrence itself has been obscured by the haze of time so that those wayfarers who perpetuate the custom are ignorant of its nature. In such cases it is purely the force of custom from generation to generation that accounts for popular belief in the virtue conforming to it. In some districts, however, where Indian settlements still exist, the legend accounting for the landmark heaps is narrated as though it were an actual episode of "early days in the country." Such instances, nevertheless, are somewhat rare. I shall refer to some of them presently.

In the esteem of an archaeologist there would be a strong differentiation between a memorial heap formed of stones and a more superficial one formed of twigs and branches of trees. The former is almost imperishable; the latter decays in the course of a few years and leaves no signs to mark its location. Essentially, however, the two are identical in function in being built of material at hand by the trailside picked up and cast upon the mounded mass as a contribution to local superstition with or without a knowledge of its source. The reason for differentiation in the materials of construction of the heaps lies in ecology. On the Coastal Plain from Cape Cod southward along the seaboard, stones being generally absent, the available material is only tree and shrub growths. In the glaciated terrain of New England rounded stones are everywhere within reach and these enter into the mass thrown together to form the marker piles. In the southern Delaware peninsula the nature of the terrain dictates the use of brush or branches in making contributions to the heap.

The element of sacrifice prevails in some areas where the Indians feel that they must make a gift to the spirit, often one of ghostly nature, whose phantom inhabits the baleful spot. I shall refer to one such in the Indian settlement of Mashpee, Mass., where I photographed a "brush heap" of pine branches, on which one of the tribesmen had cast an almost empty whiskey bottle, as an offering to the spirit confined to the ground beneath it. It was explained as a "payment" sacrifice to the victim of some tragedy enacted on the site to assure a safe passage for some fearsome wanderer on a dark night. On the Scatticook Indian reservation near Kent, Connecticut, where a small band of descendants of the converted Mahican nation lived, was another heap of stones rising several feet above the ground, added to by people who passed by casting another stone on the pile. Here, I was told, certain of the credulous and timid Indians frequently poured out a swallow or two of whiskey on their homeward way as a treat to the ghost of a murdered comrade whose shade abode there.

Brush piles and rock heaps have been well calculated to exalt the poetic fancy of historians and folk-lorists. Archaeologists, however, have so far apparently paid them scant attention. Ethnologists have described them but casually. A systematic search through literature would nevertheless

yield abundant references to records of such sites in the old Indian country of the Thirteen Fires. Through New England and southward into the Alleghenian region local historical treatises have mentioned such memorials, the listing of which would prove cumbersome.

In thumbing through the narratives of early history in the eastern colonies no more attractive and colorful account of the memorial heap (in this instance of stones) may be found than that written by the Rev. Gideon Hawley over a century ago. His account is a true gem of archaeological literature and runs as follows (italics mine):

> "We came to a resting place, and breathed our horses, and slaked our thirst in the stream, when we perceived our Indian looking for a stone, which having found, he cast to a heap, which for ages had been accumulating by passengers like him who was our guide. We inquired why he observed that rite. He answered that his father practiced it and enjoyed it on him. But he did not like to talk on the subject. I have observed in every part of the country, and among every tribe of Indians, and among those where I now am in a particular manner, *such heaps of stones or sticks* collected on the like occasion as the above. The largest heap I ever observed is that large collection of *small* stones on the mountain between Stockbridge and Great Barrington. We have a Sacrifice rock, as it is termed, between Plymouth and Sandwich, to which stones and sticks are always cast by Indians who pass it. This custom or rite is an acknowledgment of an invisible being. We may style him the unknown God, whom this people worship. This heap is his altar. The stone that is collected is the oblation of the traveler, if offered with a good mind, may be as acceptable as a consecrated animal. But perhaps these heaps of stones may be erected to a *local* deity, which most probably is the case."[1]

E. M. Ruttenber, from whose historical masterpiece the above is quoted, thinks that Hawley's description is marred by a disposition to invest unexplained customs of the Indians with suppositions. He disagreed with the clergyman's idea of worship in the act as a recognition of the "unknown God" or of a "local deity." He personally knew of such a stone heap adjacent to the Hudson river, on the Livingston Patent near the boundary between territories of the Wappinger and the Mahican, called Wawanaquassick, which term he gives as meaning "where the heaps of stones lie." The said heaps of stones were those "upon which the Indians throw another as they pass by, from an ancient custom among them."[2] He thought that being near the side of a trail or regularly traveled path and usually at or near a stream of water, the heaps had no commemorative character beyond serving to indicate to subsequent travelers that a friend had lingered there to refresh himself at the same time throwing a stone or a stick on the place. Whether we approve the judgment of the historian or the missionary is of little consequence at present. As we now review the known motives behind the formation of the heaps of stones or sticks we can imagine that each may have been plausibly correct in his observations and explanations.

Both writers just quoted had reference to tribes in the lower Hudson Valley region. These were Mahican subdivisions related to the Delawares with whom the Nanticokes were also related. The brush-heap memorial of

the Delmarva peninsula falls into the wide horizon of Algonkian custom with the rest, some of whom used stones, some sticks and stones.

Near Stockbridge, Massachusetts, another district of the Mahican country, in Monument Mountain, "the sacred crag of ..... Fisher's Nest, on whose proud summit no Indian treads without first casting his reverential tribute of a stone upon the monumental cone on its southern slope. This pile of stones on Monument is one of the mysterious shrines of the aborigine, of whose import no Indian will speak."[3] So wrote Katherine M. Abbott. She notes in addition "Such commemorative heaps of stones are found always near a beaten trail, or a spring or stream. The cone mentioned in a deed given by four Indians to Stephen Van Cortland in 1682, now marks an angle of the boundary between Claverack and Taghanick townships, New York, standing within the ancient bounds of Claverack Manor."

Reverting to the reference made by the Rev. Hawley to the sacrifice heap between Stockbridge and Great Barrington, Mass., I would cite the case previously mentioned for the Scatticook Mahican band at Kent, Conn., in which the libation was offered to a local spirit who dwelt by the stone pile. Hawley's other reference to the sacrifice heap between Plymouth and Sandwich, at the elbow of Cape Cod, brings to mind other instances of such constructions in the same general region. Some years ago we carried on research among the Wampanoag and Nauset Indians of Mashpee on the Cape. The unpublished material collected during the period of work there contains reference to brush heaps which I may now describe since they correspond almost precisely with that which Mr. Cheyney brings to our notice in southern Delaware.

In the Indian settlement of South Mashpee, on the south side of a sandy road between the shore where the Indians have fishing stations at Waquoit and the main town of Mashpee, was located a famous landmark known locally as a "tavern." It was far from any Indian dwelling, in a desolate section of pine woods at a point where a woodland path branched off from the big road, viewed only by those passing to and from the shore to fish. Possibly eight or ten feet across at the base, it stood about shoulder high, a conglomerate heap of pine branches and twigs in various stages of decay. Some freshly broken branches showed that some of the tawny fishermen of Indian Town had recently made their contribution to the legendary custom. Here there was the empty flask of "strong water" mentioned previously. My brother and I tossed our offering of a dead pine branch upon the heap, after which I photographed it. A reproduction of the photograph appears in a publication dealing with the present life of the Mashpee Indians[4]—alas without reference to the site in the printed text. The omission is made up for now in this paper which brings the data together with that from a related culture in Delaware. In both districts indeed there are no stones in the soil of the flat sandy pine-covered coastal plain. There was no explanation of the origin of the "tavern" at South Mashpee to be gleaned from the people of Indian Town, any more than in the case of the brush heap at Dagsboro described by Mr. Burton to Mr. Cheyney. Some of the Mashpee people had a vague idea that hearsay spoke of a tragic death and burial by the roadside long ago. Again the mysterious urge! Like the Dagsboro brush heap this landmark of the country was shortly demolished by roadmakers widening the highway and exists only as a memory. The agencies of "civic improvement" are too often the cause of

unwitting vandalism, and the American countryside tradition is uprooted instead of nourished. And then we complain of its barrenness as compared with other lands advertised in the historical itineraries.

A brush heap of similar proportions and legendary character stood in the Mashpee Indian settlement, not far from the main highway to Sandwich. It, too, was photographed on the original site and appeared as an illustration in the monograph referred to in the preceding paragraph. The traditional history of this "tavern" was equally vague. To the credit of the Mashpee people, however, it should be noted with hearty approbation that the conservatives of the tribe maintained it with respect and even held a "powwow" at the site to emphasize the sentiments, sometime in the 1930's if I recall the date correctly.

Another brush heap at Mashpee, which was photographed in 1922, reared its crown at the junction of the trail from Mashpee bridge leading to the old Indian church and the road to Santuit.[5] I have not heard since if the people still observe its demands from those who pass the locality.

What there was in these spirit-invested spots to induce people to call them "taverns" it is difficult to say. If a tavern is an inn for rest and refreshment of travelers the same could hardly apply here. The sole fact that someone offers a stick as symbolical payment to a supposed host or casts a single empty flask on the heap would not justify use of the term for so meager a degree of refreshment, even for a ghost. If the term were applicable to the resting place of a corpse we might settle some of the doubt of synonymy.

Southern Massachusetts also has a memorial marker in the stone-heap category. On the main highway between Edgartown and Chilmark, on the Island of Martha's Vineyard, is a small pile of round cobblestones appropriately marked by a tablet enclosed with a fence—a conspicuous archaeo-historical site for the tourist. It marks the spot where the missionary Thomas Mayhew, Jr., who converted the tribes on Martha's Vineyard, bid farewell to the company of natives who accompanied him this far from their village when he took his departure for England in 1657. It was on this voyage that he was lost. Says the historian Banks, "No Indian passed by it without casting a stone into the heap, that by their custom had grown like a cairn."[6]

The Mohegan Indians of central Connecticut, in the mid-seventeenth century, threw down the stones forming the lower level of a huge pile to mark the northern boundaries of the domain of Uncas, and added to the mound of stones whenever they passed the marker on their journeys to Hartford on tribal business. This noteworthy accumulation of rocks lies on a jutting ledge above the main road leading from Norwich (near where the Mohegan headquarters lay) to Hartford on the Connecticut River. I recall its impressive location and size equalling the dimensions of a modest mound construction. Nature had levelled down some of its elevation in the course of two centuries, and wind-blown dirt and leaves had filled the stone spaces with matter to suggest the contour of a mound as well.

My latest notice of a memorial stone heap, located on eastern Long Island, N. Y., comes in a letter (1944) from Carlos Westez (Red Thunder Cloud), a Catawba who has spent some years among the Montauk and Shinnecock people there. He writes, "Bob (Butler) and I spent Fourth of

July with Charles (Butler). We cycled down and resumed an old Montauk custom of piling stones at Poggatticut's resting place every time we pass the spot. Wonder what the highway commissioner will think and do when he sees the stones." Aside from the quaint sentiment of this letter its interest lies in its coincidence with the usual observations on brush and stone heaps made by others.

As a final word in this report, one might summarize the phenomena reviewed. A collection of data peculiarly significant in the past way of life of Algonkian tribes in the entire middle and northeastern Atlantic Slope area has been opportunely placed in our hands by the letter so thoughtfully made available to Delawareans by Mr. Cheyney. The accumulation of surface material forming a "heap" at a certain locality, intended to memorialize an event of the past, was shared by the historic Algonkian-speaking Indians of Southern Delaware in a manner similar to a habitual practice in other areas of the eastern Algonkian range. The memorial heap, like that of other loci in the Coastal Plain, was of brush. The time and original story of the episode it commemorated have been lost through time. The heap was perpetuated by persons who cast contributions upon it as they passed by. It was adjacent to a traveled path or trail. While it marked a place of minor sacrifice it was not a place of worship. The contribution made by individuals had the nature of a tribute of passage to a local spirit, providing to the giver some vague immunity against spiritual molestation. The custom was kept alive until relatively late times, and significantly for the American historian, it became transmitted to the colonists and their posterity as an American folk tradition.

The theme of this short notice has still deeper implications which could be developed by extensive analysis of the motives underlying such cultural behavior in the life of Algonkian peoples through compilation of the multitudinous references in published accounts of early writers dealing with the eastern states and towns. To the archaeologist a still more perplexing question reveals itself, to wit, what relation does the memorial heap bear to the history and distribution of earth-works of a larger and more impressive character known as mounds?

Mr. Cheyney's communication not only contributes another item of knowledge to Delaware archaeological history but another problem as well. If Delaware's archaeology and early Indian history are to remain as obscure in the future as they have in the past, it will not be because of lack of interest in the subject awakened by the publications of recent discoveries in the state. The opportune letter from Mr. Cheyney is one example of this.[7]

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(1) *History of the Indian Tribes of Hudson's River*, Albany, 1872, pp. 373-4.
(2) *Op. cit.*, p. 373.
(3) *Old Paths and Legends of the New England Border*, New York, 1907, pp. 220-1.
(4) F. G. Speck, *Territorial Subdivisions and Boundaries of the Wampanoag, Massachusetts and Nauset Indians, Indian Notes and Monographs, No. 44*, Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, 1928, Figs. 74, 75, pp. 126, 128.
(5) *Op. cit.*, Fig 75, p. 128.
(6) C. L. Banks, History of Martha's Vineyard, Boston, 1911, Vol. 1, p. 230.
(7) The author is indebted to Arthur Volkman for typing this MSS.

SKELETAL REMAINS FROM THE REHOBOTH BAY OSSUARY

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It has been estimated that there are 18 individuals buried in the ossuary at Rehoboth Bay (Weslager, 1944). Assuming the skeleton of each was fairly complete, this means there were over 3000 separate bones present. Of this lot only 12 fragmentary skulls were sent to me for study. Such a small sample does not allow me to check the estimated number of individuals buried in the pit, to confirm the sex and age indications of the skulls, or to record the morphological characters and pathological changes of the long bones. Obviously, then, my report can include only a few observations and impressions of minor value. The notes that follow are arranged in the order of the collector's numbers:

No. 1 Top of skull and a few loose fragments. Maximum length 190 mm; maximum breadth 140 mm; cranial index 73.7. Multiple small ear exostoses on each side; no perforations in the tympanic plates. No teeth present. Adult, male.

No. 2 Portion of skull vault, numerous loose fragments and right half of lower jaw. Small ear exostosis on left (no right bone); small perforation in tympanic plate on left. No antemortem loss of teeth in right half of lower jaw; moderate wear of right M_2. Probably young adult, male?

No. 3 Top of skull (figs. 1 and 2) and several fragments, including left half of upper jaw. Maximum length 190 mm; maximum breadth 143 mm; cranial index 75.3; biporionic vertical height 121 mm; minimum frontal diameter 94 mm. No ear exostoses or perforations of the tympanic plates. No antemortem loss of teeth in the left half of the upper jaw; moderate wear anteriorly. Adult, male.

No 4 Few skull fragments (no temporal bones) including parts of both jaws and some loose teeth. Teeth very slightly worn; canines and second molars not completely ossified at root tips. About 13-14 years, sex?

No. 5 Top of skull and numerous loose fragments, including both jaws. Maximum length 176 mm; maximum breadth 140 mm; cranial index 79.5; biporionic vertical height 119 mm. No ear exostoses or perforations of the tympanic plates. Moderate wear of the teeth, with antemortem loss of left M^1, Pm^2, right M_1 (right M_2 and M_3?). Adult, female?

No. 6 Part of skull vault and numerous fragments (no temporal bones), including the upper jaw. Moderate wear of the upper teeth; probably no antemortem loss. Adult, sex?

No. 7 Few skull fragments, including left temporal bone and portion of lower jaw. Slight ear exostosis on left; perforation of the tympanic plate? Left lower C, Pm's and first molar all slightly worn. Adult, sex?

No. 8 Few skull fragments, including right temporal bone. No ear exostosis or perforation of the tympanic plate on right. No teeth present. Adult, sex?

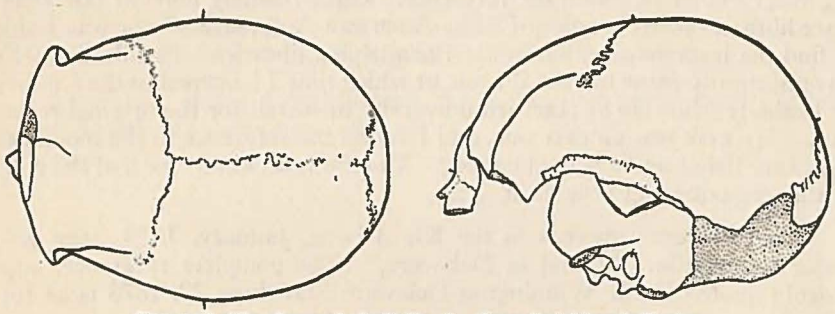
No. 9 Few skull fragments (no temporal bones), including part of lower jaw. Lower left molars show moderate (M_1) to slight (M_3) wear. Adult, probably female.

No. 10 Few skull fragments, including right temporal bone. No ear exostosis or perforation of the tympanic plate on right. No teeth present. Adult, sex?

No. 11 Few skull fragments (no temporal bones). No teeth present. Adult, sex?

No. 12 Few skull fragments including left temporal bone. No ear exostosis on left; perforation of the tympanic plate? No teeth present. Adult, sex?

Small lot of charred fragments. This consists of adult bones only and includes parts of skull and long bones. It is impossible to say whether they belong to one individual. Among this lot is a right temporal bone which is free from ear exostosis, but too damaged to permit observation of the tympanic plate.



Top and side views of skull No. 8. Cross hatching indicates damage; stippling restored surfaces.

Comments. In general these skulls from the Rehoboth Bay ossuary are indistinguishable from those described heretofore from secondary burials in tidewater Maryland and Virginia (Stewart, 1940a, 1940b, Stewart and Wedel, 1937). The cranial indices of the three measurable skulls are about average for Algonquians; that is, mesocranic. The occasional appearance of ear exostoses and tympanic perforations also is typical of the area. Within the sample from Rehoboth the teeth appear less worn and freer from decay than is true of groups living below the Chesapeake Bay. If this is the average condition for the Rehoboth group, it may be attributable to a shell-fish diet. No major pathological changes are in evidence.

Editor's Note: It is unfortunate that a more complete series of bones could not have been submitted to Dr. Stewart for examination. However, the remains were badly disintegrated, and the burial custom did not permit correlation of the skull fragments with the other disarticulated bones. It is obvious that more complete data could have been obtained by a study of the remains *in situ* by a physical anthropologist, but this was not possible due to factors beyond the control of the excavators. Under the circumstances, the excavators were fortunate in being able to salvage the 12 fragmentary skulls which incidentally represents the only skeletal material preserved to date from a Delaware ossuary.

Stewart, T. D., 1940a *Report on skeletal remains from the Piscataway Creek ossuary.* Am. Antiq., vol. 6, pp. 13-18.

Stewart, T. D., 1940b *The finding of an Indian ossuary on the York River in Virginia.* J. Washington Acad. Sci., vol. 30, pp. 356-364.

Stewart, T. D. and W. R. Wedel 1937. *The finding of two ossuaries on the site of the Indian village of Nacotchtanke (Anacostia).* J. Washington Acad. Sci., vol. 27, pp. 21.

Weslager, C. A. 1944 *Delaware buried past.* A story of archaeological adventures. Univ. of Penn. Press, Phila.

NO INDIAN MOUND IN DELAWARE

Reprinted from *The Sunday Star*, Wilmington, Del., December, 27, 1942

By C. A. WESLAGER

For years, archaeologists have been searching in Delaware for Indian mounds, but their efforts have been fruitless. The writer has spent many weary hours tramping hill and dale and to date he has found nothing to indicate that the local natives erected mounds. However, a reference was brought to my attention some months ago in which the editor of an obsolete scientific magazine called "The American Antiquarian" wrote that a mound had been found in Delaware. The authority for the statement was given as "the Wilmington Star."

Needless to say my curiosity was aroused and I lost no time in exerting every effort to obtain the reference. Unfortunately none of our Delaware libraries owned copies of "The American Antiquarian" nor was I able to find the issue in question in the Philadelphia libraries. Finally, in 1940, an opportunity came to visit Boston, at which time I hastened to the Library of Peabody Museum at Harvard university to search for the original reference. My task was an easy one, and I found the reference to the mound in Delaware listed on their card catalog. The librarian kindly located the copy of the magazine and brought it to me.

The reference appears in the No. 3 issue, January, 1879, page 166, under the caption "Mound in Delaware." The complete reference, supposedly quoted in the Wilmington Delaware Star June 22, 1878 is as follows:

"The attention of scientific men has recently been attracted to a neighborhood upon Middlesound, some ten miles east of this city, by the discovery there of large quantities of human remains of an unknown race and period, scattered at intervals along the ocean front of this plantation.

"Yesterday a party of gentlemen were present at the opening of two mounds of relics. Nothing unusual was found in the first mound, but the examination of the second resulted in a very interesting discovery. Digging a circular well in the center of the mound, at a depth of six or seven feet, there was found a circular deposit of charred coals, mingled with fragments of human bones, which had evidently laid there undisturbed for a long time and in their original deposit.

"Among the bones, they discovered a black, glittering and unknown substance resembling mica which they reserved for further examination, and a fine specimen of brown and transparent quartz. The persons to whom these bones belonged were evidently fastened together and burned at this spot and afterwards covered with soil. Who they were and what the occasion of their fate is of course a matter of conjecture. Further exploration may determine their race and nation. We believe these are the only mounds of this character and the only evidence of a similar sacrifice yet discovered."

With nervous fingers I made a copy of this excerpt which was to revolutionize Delaware archaeology. Upon my return to Wilmington, I set out in search of the mound, or mounds, or what was left of it, or them, after these many years. There followed several weeks of tramping through the

woods and along the coast, and I was unable to find a place anywhere in Delaware called "middlesound" nor a neighborhood that remotely fitted the description carefully delineated in the article.

Hopeful of finding a dateline in the original newspaper, and possibly information which would lead me to the mound, I visited the Wilmington Library and began a search through the old copies of the Wilmington Star. Imagine my consternation to find that the Star was not published in 1879; a later phone call to the editor of the Wilmington Star elicited the information that its first issue left the press in 1881.

My story ends with a fulfillment of the mission in Washington, D. C., during the past few weeks. I visited the Library of Congress, where the files of all newspapers are available. I found that in 1879 a paper was published in Wilmington, North Carolina called the Star. In the issue of this newspaper on the date mentioned, I found on its faded pages the account of the mound — not in Wilmington, Delaware — but in Wilmington, *North Carolina.* Thus another archaeological mystery was solved, and the mystery would never have existed except for the carelessness of a magazine editor, who wrote Delaware instead of North Carolina.

Moreover, no authentic Indian mounds have yet been located in Delaware. If you know of any, speak up!

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If there are others whose names have been unintentionally omitted, will you please bring it to the editor's attention.