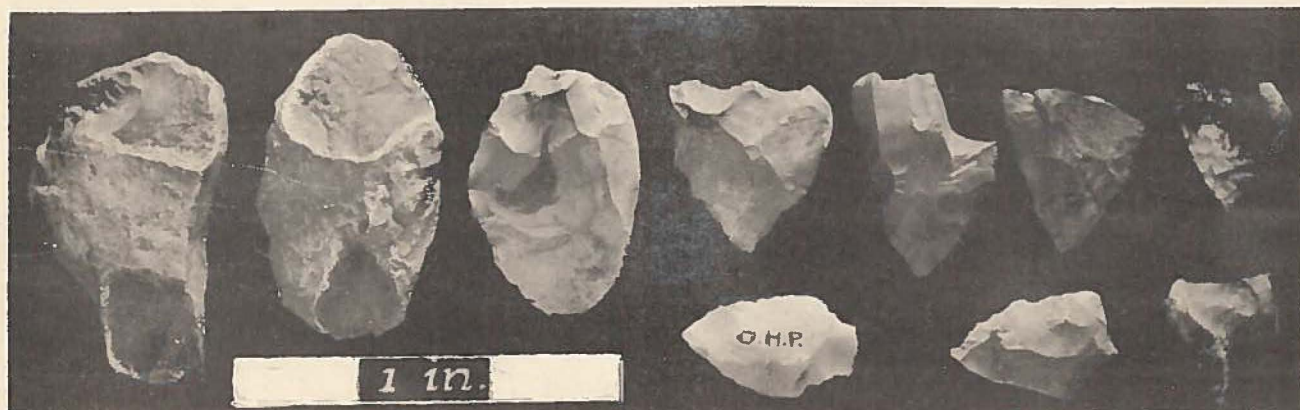
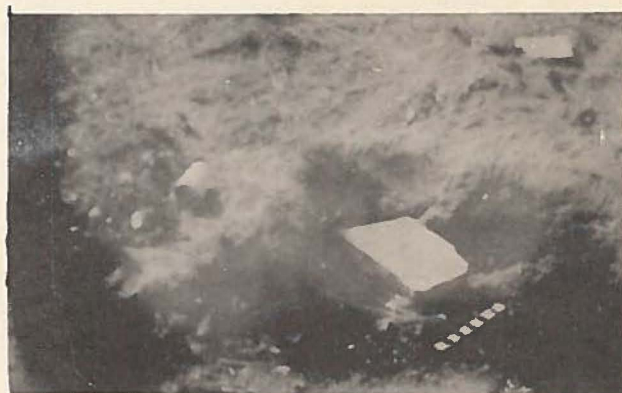


VOL.VII, NO.3

DEC.1955

# THE ARCHEOLOG

NEWS LETTER OF THE  
SUSSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



# T h e   A R C H E O L O G

Volume 7, Number 3

December 1955

An editorial board consisting, for 1956, of Catharine Maull, David Marine, Henry Hutchinson and Warren Calloway, will pass upon all material submitted for publication in the Archeolog.

\*\*\*\*\*

The date of the present issue will require an explanation only for those who are not aware that archaeologist quarterlies generally consist of three numbers a year. The important bulletin of the Pennsylvania society has preserved its status on occasion by numbering an early issue 1 and 2 and a later one 3 and 4. We are taking a less easy way in publishing material collected in 1955. A 1956 number is under way for March - or April.

\*\*\*\*\*

COVER: One of the events of the 1955 season was the dinner meeting with, as guests, Dr. T. Dale Stewart, curator of anthropology at the Smithsonian and Mrs. Stewart; Dr. Waldo R. Wedel, curator of archaeology at the Smithsonian, and Latimer Ford, president of the recently founded Maryland Archaeological Society with a delegation of members from that society. Our own membership was well represented and several organizational and archaeological problems were discussed. The visitors from Maryland had brought with them some of their most interesting finds, and Ralph W. Jackson showed some of the items of his large collection from the Sandy Hill area. During the dinner and at the dig the next day Dr. Stewart made several excellent Kodachromes from which we have taken two for the cover. The charming color is lacking but the absence of grain in color films, permits a greater enlargement than is possible with black and white film of equal size. Of the two photographs in the middle row, the one at the left is of a dark patch of earth which became visible after the scraper had removed the top soil in a trial area at the Mispillion site. This patch contained a burial that in some respects was unlike any so far uncovered in Sussex county. The pit did not contain any shell refuse and would not have been found by probing so its discovery is a vindication of the method of scraping in thin layers and under strict supervision. At the right is an anvilstone in situ - one of the few found on the spot where it had been used. No doubt it had several domestic uses such as in breaking marrow bones, walnuts and hickory-nuts, but some 260 chips and rejects were found in the soil of the pit and 24 larger broken stones which may have been hammerstones, with the largest concentration at the side toward the stone anvil. The top layer of refuse shells extended over part of this stone suggesting either that it had become obsolete or that the persons who had used it were moving farther than they saw fit to carry it. The bottom row consists, with two exceptions, of rejects from the anvilstone pit. These discards tell us more of the methods used than a large number of perfect points. Some discussion of these craft indications will be found on another page of this number under the caption "Rejects".

PROGRESS REPORT  
MISPELLION SITE

H. E. Hutchinson, Chairman.

To date, eight refuse pits and two burials have been uncovered and explored, and about 600 sq. ft. of top soil removed by hand, and about 1900 sq. ft. by machine, within the leased area of this site. Outside the leased area a number of refuse pits have been excavated by Mr. Omwake et al, which probably are part of the same settlement or camp as our leased area. Written reports on only two pits and one burial have been submitted, so very little detail can be described in this article; however, Burial #2, and the method of top soil removal by mechanical means can be described.

BURIAL #2. When the top soil was removed by the scraper this burial was indicated by a large dark-soil area surrounded by clean, yellow, sandy, virgin soil (See Cover). This discolored area at the "plow line", or the bottom of the top soil, was roughly oval in shape, about 9 ft. long by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ft. wide at its two greatest axes. The skull was  $35\frac{1}{2}$  inches below the original surface, and the disturbed soil at skull level was about  $5\frac{1}{4}$  ft. by 19 inches at its two greatest axes. There was about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches of discolored soil under those bones that were still intact. The skull was in a vertical position with the back of the head pressed close against virgin clay soil behind it, and its chin resting on one cervical vertebra. No trace of shoulder, arm, rib, or back bone was found. At a location where, in an extended burial, the bones of the pelvic arch would be there were a few small fragments of badly weathered bony material which may have been pieces of the ilium. Then, in position where they would normally

be, were the right and left femurs, both of which lacked their articular surfaces (epiphyses). The left femur had a trumpet vine root growing all the way through its marrow cavity. Then, in normal position, were the right and left tibiae and one (right) fibula, these also lacking their epiphyses. No ankle or foot bones were found. The skull was complete with lower jaw in place and with all but one of its teeth. The teeth were slightly worn and two had cavities in them. The sutures in the skull were slightly fused. A superficial examination of the skull by Dr. T. Dale Stewart indicated that this burial was that of a young woman. A further report thereon will be forthcoming.

In this grave we found no "grave goods". In the fill over the skeleton were: One clear quartz pebble with one chip broken from one end; this was about  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches below the surface and almost over the skull. Two grit tempered fabric impressed potsherds (which matched) were just below the plow line; one grit tempered cord marked sherd about 14 inches below plow line. Two shell tempered plain potsherds at 18 inches and 26 inches deep. About a dozen fragments of shell were scattered throughout the fill.

The head of this burial was to the north-west, and the line of the burial was parallel with the natural contour of the slight elevation or "hill" on which this site is located.

I think the most unusual thing about this burial is the relative lack of artifacts and shell in the fill over the body,

and that it was not directly associated with any shell or refuse pit. Undoubtedly we would not have found this burial in our usual procedure of only excavating pits where we have unusual response to "feel" of our probe. By removing the top soil on a site it reveals all intrusions into the sub soil, and we should do more of it.

**TOP SOIL REMOVAL.** In order to try and identify some trace of the habitations of the people who occupied this site, we decided to remove as much of the top soil as possible and look for post molds or other intrusions into the sub soil. With our small number of diggers this would have taken months to accomplish by orthodox methods, so we decided to use mechanical means. Our experience in removal of top soil at the deVries Site with bulldozer and road-scraper was not very satisfactory, since these machines were heavy and the earth burden removed was pushed ahead of the wheels or treads, and these wheels or treads would disrupt the desired smooth surface left behind the edge of the scraper blade. We therefore decided to use a light farm tractor which pulled a six-foot straight blade, thus any wheel disturbance made by the tractor wheels was eliminated by the blade behind. This method proved to be quite satisfactory.

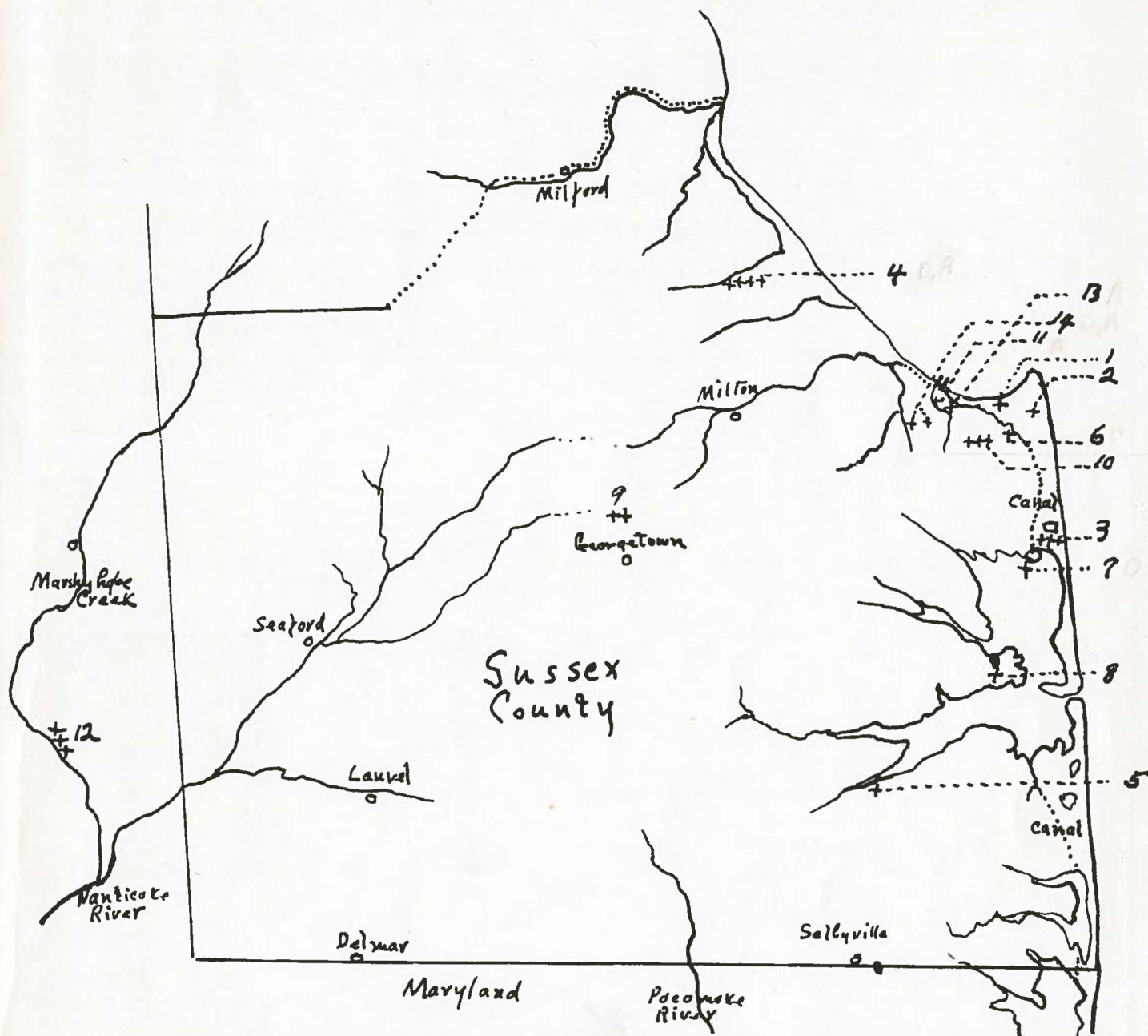
At the Mispillion Site the sandy soil has been deeply cultivated. The top soil being 8 inches to 14 inches deep. We took several passes scraping about 2 inches deep each until we were down near the virgin soil, then we scraped about 1/2 inch at a time. This left quite a clean and smooth surface, requiring little or no troweling, and showed up clearly any intrusions into the sub-soil. By this pro-

cess two men and the skilled tractor operator (Mr. Warren Calloway) exposed approximately 1900 sq. ft. and backfilled the same in two days. Actual working time at the site was not more than 5 hours per day. The tractor and scraper were driven to the site (about 30 miles) and back each day (the working days were not continuous). To load and unload the tractor from the truck that transported it, we backed the truck up against a small cut in the highway right-of-way, and ran the tractor on and off under its own power.

No attempt was made to find "all" the artifacts that may have been in the top soil removed by this method. Two men followed the scraper, and any artifacts that happened to be exposed were picked up and recorded, and any discoloration that looked unusual or unnatural was immediately marked and investigated.

In addition to the Burial #2 described above, this mechanical top soil removal revealed:- 6 possible post molds (one of which had a rusty nail in the bottom); remains of two fireplaces, one of which had a triangular jasper projectile point near its bottom, and the other had several jasper flakes or chips mixed with its charcoal-soil fill. Also many root molds were investigated but not recorded.

No definite "pattern" is discernible in the location of the post molds, fireplaces, refuse pits, and burials that have been plotted to date, but we hope to uncover additional data which may form some basis for reasonable deductions on their house or village arrangement.



## SUMMARY OF THE OLDER ARCHEOLOGICAL WORK IN SUSSEX COUNTY, DELAWARE

BY DAVID MARINE

As Mr. Weslager states in his book - "Delaware's Buried Past", Professor Joseph Leidy of University of Pennsylvania may be called the father of Archeology in Sussex County, although Francis Jordan, a Philadelphia importer and amateur archeologist, also of Philadelphia, states that he first visited this area in about 1859, or six years before Leidy (see map above)

Leidy visited the Lewes area twice -

in 1865 and again in 1866, and on both occasions as outings on the Delaware River. His brief accounts are published in the Proc. Academy Natural Science, Philadelphia, 1865, page 95, and 1866, page 290. His accounts are worth quoting. He was on an excursion trip and the boat had anchored inside the Breakwater Harbor. After spotting the white shell heaps (I) from the deck, he went ashore to examine them. They were located

about one-half mile from the Bay shore and a mile east of Lewes, and extended over a half mile to the base of a huge Cape Henlopen sand dune. Mixed with the oyster and clam shells was much charcoal. Many pottery fragments were found among the burnt shells. He found a clay pipe four inches long with the bowl bent at an obtuse angle from its thick stem and ornamented with bands and triangles. A few crude arrowheads and chips of yellow and red jasper were recovered. In one of the shell heaps he found portions of a human skeleton. All these findings were made within the hour at his disposal and with no other tool than his walking stick! Leidy said the local people called these shell deposits - "Indian heaps". Leidy returned the next year on a similar excursion, but prepared for a longer stay and with ample tools to examine thoroughly the shell heaps. He was accompanied by Mr. Cassin, the ornithologist, Mr. Robert Frazer, and Mr. Canby, the botanist, of Wilmington. They were surprised to find the deposits were all quite superficial - from a few inches to less than a foot in thickness. In a number of places they appeared to form hillocks, but these proved to be accumulations around former trees. They also visited another similar accumulation of shells (2) on the south shore of the Cape and were told similar heaps were found in many locations down the coast. All the heaps examined contained fragments of pottery, chips of jasper and arrowheads. A few copper rings were also found, and in one heap Mr. Canby found several English coins. Dr. Leidy thought the heaps were of no great age and were probably contemporary with the discovery of the country by Europeans.

At the same meeting of the Academy a Mr. Ennis said he had seen the same type of shell heaps

in New Jersey near Cape May Courthouse. Francis Jordan also has a description of these two shell deposits in the Cape Henlopen area as reported in an article by a correspondent of the New York Evening Telegram and reprinted in the Wilmington Every Evening for September 27, 1883. The shell deposit to the south of the Cape he described as "Long Neck Branch" (2) and the other as the "Lewes sand flat" (1) deposit. The latter is less interesting because most of the heaps have been hauled away for agricultural lime. He states that thirty years ago these heaps were fifteen to twenty feet high and visible from far out in the ocean. He found a stone corn mill weighing over one hundred pounds, many arrowheads, celts, pipes and pottery fragments.

Jordan also has a chapter on Delaware Village sites in his monograph on Aboriginal Fishing Stations on the Coast of the Middle Atlantic States, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1906.

Chronologically, the next archeological report seems to have been Francis Jordan's, entitled "The Remains of an Aboriginal Encampment at Rehoboth, Delaware", and read at a meeting of the Philadelphia Numismatic and Antiquarian Society, February 5, 1880. He states that he first visited the site twenty one years ago, but that the first opportunity for examination came in 1879. He describes the site as directly in the rear of Rehoboth City (3) (not to be confused with Rehoboth Beach) and not over five hundred feet from the sea. Present dimensions of the encampment are: length three-fourths mile north and south, and width varies from one hundred to five hundred feet. A quarter of a mile to the south stretches out the famous Rehoboth Bay. Skirting the upper part of the western boundary of the encampment lie three fresh water

lakes - the largest perhaps fifty acres in area (formerly Newbold, now called Silver Lake). Says the Indians displayed keen appreciation and excellent judgment in selecting such a site. The shells occur in small mounds or refuse pits in which he found arrowheads, fire cracked stones, and many pottery fragments - the largest about hand size, also celts. Describes one of the celts as seven inches long and two and one-half inches wide with a drilled depression for the thumb. In other pits he found axes, bones of mammals and thirty copper beads.

For the next fifty years (1880 - 1930) I have been unable to find any recorded archeological work in Sussex County. Then, beginning around 1930 and with explosive suddenness the Delaware Archeological Society was organized in 1933 by Geiger Omwake and a Bulletin was started - all this as a result of renewed interest which was probably sparked by finding the Slaughter Creek site in 1928 by Clark Hill.

Continuing with the Rehoboth City site, Clark Hill, Road Engineer for Sussex County, exposed four skeletons in 1930 while grading a new highway (King Charles Street) between Silver Lake and Dewey Beach and directly behind the Rodney Sharp property. He says he did not notify anyone this time because of his sad experience at the Slaughter Creek site. In 1933 Joseph Wigglesworth reported in Vol. I No. I of the Bulletin of the Delaware Archeological Society a brief account of his excavations on what is obviously the Rehoboth City site, but does not mention Jordan's earlier work or the date of his excavations.

He states that the original skeleton of this group of 14 adults and one child was discovered in the face of the cliff by the Rev. C. C. Morhart - a Lutheran clergyman of Cleveland, Ohio.

He speaks of the extensive and rapid erosion of the beach in recent years. The skeletons were found on land owned about 1865 by Chief Justice Comegys and at present is owned by the Y.M.C.A. of Baltimore. The skeletons were found at a depth of three feet four inches and six feet west of the face of the cliff. The burial pit was nine feet two inches long and six feet eight inches wide. Most of the burials were extended with heads pointing south. Only four arrowheads and twelve fragments of pottery were found in the ossuary. Then he says "A number of years ago six additional skeletons were found about forty feet north east of where I found the fifteen", but again gives no reference. Another skeleton and some artifacts were discovered on this site when the cellar of the house now occupied by Dr. J. A. Vansant was dug in 1951.

Chronologically, the reports of the Slaughter Creek site (4) come next in 1933-34. The site apparently first came to the notice of archeologists in connection with the opening of a new County road along the south bank by Clark Hill about 1928. Mr. Hill told me he notified Mr. Harold Purnell and some other persons interested in archeology of the rich deposits of Indian artifacts. As the news of the discovery spread, large crowds gathered and forced the suspension of road work. The Department of Anthropology of the University of Pennsylvania, headed by Prof. D. S. Davidson, undertook an investigation of the site. Numbers 1 and 2 of Vol. II of the Bulletin of the Delaware Archeological Society are given over entirely to reports of their work. Number 1 gives the report of Dr. Noon's study of the five skeletons found at the site with the aid of Geiger Omwake and Capt. Fisher of the Milford C.C.C. Camp. Dr. David-

son states that more than one hundred refuse pits - some up to ten feet in diameter, but mostly four to five feet, and three to four feet deep were examined. Sherds from the same pot were found in several adjacent pits but most of the pottery fragments were found in a single pit.

Onwale states that parts of thirty pots were found, some with round bottoms and some with pointed bottoms. Some were plain; others were incised using the triangle design. Sand, mica and shell were used for tempering. Triangular and notched arrowheads were found mostly on the surface. No house sites were found. Of the faunal remains, they identified bones of deer, bear, raccoon, turkey, turtle and sturgeon, but neither rabbit nor opossum.

Chemical examinations of pottery from Slaughter Creek and Sharptown, Maryland, were made by Dr. Horton, for Silica, Aluminum, Magnesium, Potassium and Calcium, but only slight differences were noted.

The Slaughter Creek site was one of the three most important sites so far found in Sussex County, (the other two being Rehoboth City and Townsend) and it was unfortunate that so valuable a site was largely destroyed through lack of planning, lack of management and looting by hordes who came with no thought of its cultural value. Let us resolve to make a better record and a better job of any other site of Indian Culture we may find.

In 1934 W. V. Steen reported recovering a canoe at Dagworthy Landing on Pepper Creek (5). He states the canoe was twelve feet long, eighteen inches wide, and twelve inches deep; bottom three inches thick and side walls one and one-half inches. It was made of pine. (Where is this specimen now?) If authentic it should be in the State Museum.

In 1939 Weslager, Sparo, Scott, Alexander, and Swientochowski reported their work on a shell heap on the Moore farm along the canal bank about half way between Lewes and Rehoboth Beach (6). The shell layer was fourteen to sixteen inches deep and yielded 415 sherds, 16 arrowheads - all triangular and of jasper. One burial was found. They concluded the heap may have been accumulated during one season's fishing. The large complete pot recently found by Mrs. Samuel Sloan and Mr. Orville Poets definitely belongs to this site.

Weslager in his book gives an interesting account of finding on the sloping highground between the Moore farmhouse and the marsh on recently plowed land, and immediately after a heavy rain, about fifty circular areas where the earth was stained a deep brick red color. Each one was about six feet in diameter. In these areas they found fire cracked stones, charcoal and animal bones. After several days drying the red discoloration disappeared. They marked several of these areas and in later examinations found evidence of post molds. Many interesting specimens were found during the excavation of these areas, including a gorget, celt, pestle, several axes, bone implements, etc. Also numerous pot sherds.

In 1942 Weslager, Gordon, Corkran, and Dr. Dale Stewart made a two day examination of Thompson's Island in Rehoboth Bay (7) (historically this island should be called Avery's Island) which apparently was previously known as an Indian camp site, but I have found no specific reference to it. They found only two dog burials. Two years later (1944) Weslager and Givan found an ossuary in this area with the skeletal remains

of eighteen persons. He says the grave was three feet wide and nine feet long and about two feet below the surface. (Colonel Corkran and I in the summer of 1952 visited the site and detected bone about two feet down in this area; also refuse pits, and there is still undisturbed material in this area.) During the excavations, but not in the ossuary, they found a broken argylite arrow point and three rolled copper beads, each about one inch long. It should be pointed out that copper beads have been reported only by (1) Dr. Leidy in the shell heaps south of the Cape (1866); by (2) Francis Jordan at Rehoboth City (in 1879); and by (3) Kenneth Givan on Thompson's Island (1944). All these beads were similar - thin copper sheeting rolled into tubes. It is of interest that the beads found by Leidy were associated with English coins. Could it be that the copper for these beads came from a shipwreck, or possibly as trade goods? Dr. Dale Stewart's interest in these Indian skeletal remains was whether any evidence of syphilis could be found. He found none.

Prior to 1944 Weslager, Dr. Frank Speck and Anthony Higgins visited the north shore of Indian River Bay and on the south side of Indian Cabin Creek (8), they located a grave partially exposed in the bank, and planned to return for the examination of it. Upon their return, however, they found that the tidal currents had washed away at least ten feet of the bank and destroyed the burial and anything that may have been with it.

One other site should be mentioned (9). This site is situated about one and one-half miles north of Georgetown and was called to my attention by Mr. Harold Purnell, who has a large collection of artifacts which he found surface hunting, including two beautiful Folsomoid arrow points. I recently

visited this site with Mr. Purnell, and it lies at the top of the water shod between a branch of the Broadkilm on the east and Deep Creek, one of the head water streams of the Nanticoke River, on the west. This might well have been an Indian portage between these two water courses, just as the Ritter site investigated by Geiger Omwake might be a portage around the Great Marsh from the Lewes area.

The very recent sites including the Townsend (10), Russell (11), Willin (12), School (13), Ritter (14), etc., have all been projects of the Sussex Archeological Association organized in January 1948 by Geiger Omwake, and are beyond the scope of this review. However, all these should be summarized when the work of the first ten years of this Association is reviewed.

\*Read at a Meeting of Sussex Archeological Association, September 17, 1953.

\* \* \* \*

Robert Beverley - The History and Present State of Virginia, London, 1705. Book III, Chap. III.

"The manner the INDIANS have of building their Houses is very slight and cheap; when they would erect a WIGWANG, which is the INDIAN name for a House, they stick Saplings into the ground by one end; and bend the other at the top, fastening them together by strings made of fibrous roots, the rind of Trees, or of the green Wood of the White Oak, which will rive into Thongs. The smallest sort of these Cabbins are conical like a Bee-hive; but the larger are

## REJECTS

built in an oblong form, and both are covered with the Bark of Trees, which will rive off in great flakes. Their Windows are little holes left open for the passage of Light, which in bad weather they stop with Shutters of the same Bark, opening the Leeward Windows for Air and Light. Their Chimney, as among the true Born IRISH, is a little hole in the top of the House, to let out the Smoak, having no sort of Funnel, or anything within, to confine the Smoke from ranging through the whole Roof of the Cabbins, if the vent will not let it out fast enough. The Fire is always made in the middle of the Cabbin. Their Door is a Pendent Mat, when they are near home; but when they go abroad, they barricade it with great Logs of Wood set against the Mat, which are sufficient to keep out Wild Beasts. There's never more than one Room in a House, except in some Houses of State, or Religion, where the Partition is made only by Mats, and loose Poles."

(NOTE) - Beverley's description of the methods and materials used by the Indians in the construction of their houses in the Coastal Plain of Virginia, Maryland and Delaware may possibly explain in part the difficulty archeologists have in finding or in identifying post molds of their houses even in favorable locations. Small white oak saplings that could be bent easily would be mostly sap-wood of high water content which on decomposition would leave only small amounts of organic matter to withstand oxidation over the centuries.

\* \* \* \*

Referring again to the arrow-heads on the cover; the first two from the left have three flakes struck off - two at the back being both struck from the left side. The surface of the fractures is rough and it may be this that caused these pebbles to be discarded. The third from left is so deeply "weathered" that only a small core of the brown color is left. The oxidized stone splits less easily and on one side there are marks of repeated attempts to strike off flakes but the stone crumbled instead of fracturing.

A perfect triangular arrow-head was found near the bottom of this pit and near indications of a fire. Seemingly it had been lost rather than discarded. The line between the proximal points was rather deeply concave where the arrow shaft would have been seated. We can assume that this was the standard shape at the time. To get this concave line of upper edge it would seem logical to start knocking off chips at the center, but these discards indicate that the first blows were struck inside the points and the high place left in the middle was struck off last; a much safer way when there were no flaws such as the three rejects in the upper right show clearly. There was doubt at first as to whether the one in the upper corner was really a reject, for the point and cutting sides were very sharp. The color was deep red mixed with gray and some small and one rather large chip were found, almost certainly from the same pebble. From this larger chip the writer made the point at lower right. The two remaining points illustrate failure due to stubborn thick areas.

The finding in place of this heavy anvil-stone supports what many experimenters have claimed - that the tough pebble raw material our Indians were forced to use was fashioned principally by percussion.

### New Members - 1955

Mr. and Mrs. L. T. Alexander, 231 Pinehurst Road, Fairfax, Wilmington, Delaware.  
Rev. Edward Bernard Carley, Jr., St. Ann's Church, 2013 Gilpin Avenue, Wilmington, Delaware.  
Master John C. Dobson, 108 East Clark Avenue, Milford, Delaware.  
Master Garrett L. Grier, 6 Delaware Avenue, Milford, Delaware.  
Dr. Dorothy Cross Jensen, Professor of Anthropology, Hunter College, New York, N. Y., and Archeological Adviser, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton.  
Mrs. Manfred Keller, 1105 Brandon Lane, Westover Hills, Wilmington, Delaware.  
Mr. Douglass W. McGee, Sharpstown, Maryland.  
Mr. Bernard W. Mullin, Sharpstown, Maryland.  
Miss Mabel Oothoudt, Millville, Delaware.  
Mr. Henry Pancoast, 422 Kings Highway, Dover, Delaware.  
Mrs. R. T. Parsons, Edgewater Farm, Cambridge, Maryland.  
Dr. Ruth Rivard, Millville, Delaware.

### New Subscription Memberships

Peabody Museum Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

### News Items

Henry Hutchinson spent two months last summer in archeological work in Southwestern Utah with a group of graduate students from the Dept. of Archeology, University of California.

Mr. and Mrs. Perry S. Flegel have accepted a position with the Near East Foundation as a Rural Educator with headquarters in Kabul, Afghanistan. They will be away for two years.

Col. Wilbur S. Corkran gave an illustrated lecture on the Inca ruins of Cuzco and Machu Picchu in Peru.

Through an unfortunate oversight no source citation was used for the photograph of the flat-bottomed pot which appeared on the cover of our June 1955 number. The photograph was made at the Smithsonian where copies may be had.