

Number Three
August, 1960

--Houston Archeological Society
Affiliates with Instituto
Interamericano--

The Houston Archeological Society has recently had its application approved by the Instituto Interamericano, an organization of persons interested in the anthropology of the Americas and an agency of the Interam Foundation.

The director of the Instituto Interamericano is Dr. Carl B. Compton, 5133 NT, Denton, Texas.

Dr. Art Gallaher, an associate professor of anthropology and sociology at the University of Houston and a member of this Society, was elected by our board of directors and approved by membership vote to represent us in the Houston area and has subsequently been appointed as a fellow of the Instituto Interamericano.

--Lab Sessions- 41-1b-2

Artifacts taken from society excavations at Dayton are being processed and discussed every Wednesday night from 7:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. at Gordon Bailey's house-6002 Brady St., Houston. The belief is that for every hour spent in actual excavation, three hours will have to be spent in evaluating the material - we need your help!

This newsletter will be published from time to time as the cash on hand may determine. Articles, news items, and reports are needed for future newsletters. Please notify H. Mewhinney, FA-3-3131, if you have any item, whether it be a few sentences or several pages, of interest to our readers.

TEXAS ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL MEETING

to be held at the University of Houston
November 4, 5, 6, 1960.

The University of Houston and the Houston Archeological Society will be joint hosts to the State Society annual meeting this fall.

Friday, Nov. 4:

Afternoon: T.A.S. executive
committee meeting

Evening: T.A.S. business meeting

Saturday, Nov. 5:

Morning: Presentation of papers

Afternoon: " " "
(at M. D. Anderson Auditorium)

Evening: Banquet in Green Room of
Oberholtzer Hall. Artifacts will be
on display at the banquet.

Sunday, Nov. 6:

A choice of several local site tours
will be directed by members of the
H.A.S.

Committees are now being formed to
carry out this program.

Our associate editor is listed as John J. Dieckman. Unfortunately, as of August 18, The Tidewater Oil Co., Mr. Dieckman's employer, found need of competent surface geologists in Berkeley, Calif.

Members know his work on previous newsletters, as well as the pottery symposium lectures to be published in the future.

The Houston Geological Society Bulletin of 1959-60 carried an article by Mr. Dieckman entitled, "Notes on Houston Area Archeology". As may be indicated by an article of this type appearing in a Geological Society bulletin, Mr. Dieckman was interested in the accumulation and distribution of archeological knowledge in all related fields. In this capacity as well as his directorship, he has served this society well.

The Present Status of Publishing Papers Presented At The Houston Pottery Symposium-

At present much work is needed to complete the final job of publishing the talks and papers presented Dec. 6, 1959, at the University of Houston.

Dr. T. N. Campbell and Dr. E. Mott Davis of the Department of Anthropology, University of Texas, have submitted typewritten copies of their papers, along with illustrations for plates.

One and half papers have been transcribed from the H.A.S. tapes by Mr. Gordon Bailey. This leaves one lecture and all the general discussion to be taken off the tapes. Then we will need final typing even before any preliminary editing is done.

In short, this publication is far out of sight until more typists are engaged in this endeavor.

THE W. T. JAMISON SITE - 41-LB-2

by Gordon Bailey

One of the purposes of the H.A.S. as slated in our constitution is the "collection of materials and data...to sponsor projects and promote investigations to inculcate a wider public understanding and appreciation of Archeology".

As a major step in fulfilling this purpose, the H.A.S. board of directors took steps at the beginning of this year to sponsor the excavation and study of a sand midden site in or around Harris county. An Excavating Committee of four was appointed by the directors to select a site for excavations, the method of excavation, and a system of analysis of material gathered. Mr. John Payne was selected as director of the dig, Mr. Charles Caldwell, Sr., as assistant director, and Mr. Robert Stevenson and the writer were appointed "Crew Chiefs".

Since these appointments, Mr. Payne has been sent to Colorado by his firm and Mr. Caldwell is now director. Mr. R. B. Worthington was asked to join the excavating committee and has accepted.

The first problem of this undertaking was the selection of a site. Mr. Worthington was helpful in acquainting the excavating committee with several sites in the Addicks area. However, permission for excavation on these lands was unattainable from the government and landowners alike. Delays in obtaining a site for excavation extended into the middle of May, then a site in Liberty County, three miles east of Dayton was suggested by Mr. W. L. Atwood of

Baytown. Mr. J. R. Jamison, a son of the landowner, Mr. W. T. Jamison, was approached for permission to investigate the site. Permission was readily given by Mr. Jamison. While visiting Mr. Jamison, the excavating committee was able to examine parts of a skull and fragmentary remains of a burial removed by Mr. Jamison from the bank of a pit 50' in diameter previously dug on the edge of the midden by people searching for gold. Numerous projectile points had also been taken from this site by Mr. Jamison. Incidentally, Mr. J. R. Jamison has written an article on the search for gold here entitled "The Sinking Treasure of Bowie Creek", which appeared in Vol. XXIX, and "The Horns on the Toad" published by the Texas Folklore Society.

A 3' x 3' test pit was dug on this midden to a depth of 21" in 7" levels. Artifacts from this pit indicated an accumulation of midden debris and with the permission of the Jamisons it was decided to begin excavations as soon as possible.

Excavations began May 5, 1960, with the work of cleaning the underbrush from the site, the survey of north-south and east-west trenches, as well as preparing a general contour map of the area, and the excavation of two levels.

Since a detailed description of methods and progress at this site would encompass several pages of this newsletter, suffice it to say that a total of 43-6" levels have been completed in 7-5' squares. Three of these squares have been excavated to a final depth of over 4' with an archaic deposit containing only lithic artifacts resting on the Besumont Clay surmounted by pottery and arrowpoints in the upper levels.

Future study of this site will entail a botanical evaluation of the area by Dr. Robert A. Vines, noted botanist of this area. Our editor, Mr. Mewhinney, is an expert on spoil flakes and we hope to have him examine the numerous flakes found in the site. Dr. Donald Lewis, geochemist for Shell Laboratories, has volunteered to conduct chemical analysis of material found at the site. A preliminary geological study of the site has

already been submitted by Mr. John J. Dieckman. As these excavations have progressed, it has been quite revealing to this writer to witness the amount of help and information anyone of our members can impart by just being at the site and giving his own ideas on the matter at hand. I think it is in place at this time to list some of the contributions of our members under the following somewhat generalized headings.

Survey of the Site -

John J. Dieckman, Lewis Lenz, Norvil Wilson

Geological and Chemical Aspects of the Site-

John J. Dieckman, E. Raymond Ring, Dr. Donald R. Lewis

Carpenter Work -

J. D. and K. P. Harmier, Norvil Wilson, Charles Caldwell, Jr. Special thanks are due to Mr. Stevenson, a visitor and excellent carpenter, who has spent several Sundays constructing tables and a field office for our added comfort.

Secretarial Work -

Mrs. Val Larsen, Mrs. Patricia Norwood, Miss Roseline Pillaert, Mrs. W. P. Caskey.

Contributors to the Preliminary Understanding of the Site -

Mr. W. L. Atwood, Mr. & Mrs. W. P. Caskey, Alan, Bruce and Gary Duke, Damon C. Dunn, Billy Moore, Wayne and Dwayne Neyland, and Les Pennington.

Because of their generous assistance, forbearance, and understanding concerning our aim, and the aim of archeology in general, Mr. & Mrs. J. R. Jamison, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Jamison, and Mr. & Mrs. W. T. Jamison have been unanimously elected as honorary members of the H.A.S.

All members are invited to participate in the excavations and lab sessions and visitors are always welcome.

This site will probably be shown in connection with the forthcoming T.A.S. Meeting.

NYMPH POINT #1

by Robert W. Stevenson

About the first of July of this year, I was notified by Hubert Mewhinney of a burial which had been reported to the Houston Post by Frank Mebane of Alvin. We arranged to investigate the burial the following Wednesday, July 6. Mr. Mewhinney, a writer for the Houston Post, was assigned to cover the story and wanted someone with some archeological experience to do the actual excavation. The story was printed in the Sunday Houston Post, July 17.

The site is about twenty-eight miles south of Alvin, Texas, on a low peninsula called Nymph Point, in Brazoria County. It is about two miles by boat from the Mebane camp near the mouth of Chocolate Bayou.

The field party consisted of Hybert Mewhinney, Dan Hardy, Post photographer, and Frank Mebane I, fish and game supervisor, and Frank II and Bill, sons of the fish and game supervisor, and the writer.

The burial was on a sandy shelf of the beach. At low tide, the condition at the time of this investigation, this shelf is about a foot above the water. At high tide this shelf is covered and the water extends up to a two foot bluff, the top of which is covered with salt grass. Wave action had exposed the burial. The skeleton was in a semi-flexed position, the leg bones being drawn up to the pelvis, but the backbone being only slightly inclined forward. Grave orientation was west facing north, the individual lying on his left side. The skull was missing except for some eroded fragments including some teeth, the rest of the skeleton was well represented but in very poor condition. The matrix or fill which contained the burial was black gumbo common to the region. It had been sun-tempered to the point of extreme hardness. The fragil condition of the bones, the

hardness of the matrix, and the lack of professional excavation equipment led us to give up any attempt to save the skeletal material. Everything in the gumbo matrix, including the fragmentary skeletal material, was run through a half inch screen. This process revealed two arrow points in association with the upper part of the skeleton and one with the lower.

The teeth and points were taken to the University of Texas and the U. of T. site number 41-Bo-2 was assigned to this site. Dr. Thomas McKern, physical anthropologist at the University, identified the teeth as those of an adult. No further analysis was possible. The extreme wear evident on the teeth was of interest to him. Two of the points were classified as Scallorn points. They were from the upper part of the grave. One was one inch long and 11/16" wide (estimated, one barb missing). The other was 1 3/4" long and 7/8" wide. The unclassified point, from the lower part of the grave, is 15/16" long and 11/16" wide with barbs less pronounced than the other two and with a rectangular base instead of the expanding concave base of the Scallorn types. All three points showed skillful pressure flaking.

This site is of special interest because of the association of the projectile points with the skeletal material. Generally, coastal burials in this region have little or no furnishings.

SALVAGE WORK NEEDED

by Wayne Neyland

One of the greatest services the Houston Archeological Society can make to the science of archeology is in the form of contributions in archeological salvage work.

We are all familiar with the appalling rate of growth of Greater Houston and its outlying subdivisions. The almost incredible rate of industrialization and urbanization within our immediate area constitutes a serious threat to many archeological sites, especially those immediately adjacent to streams and bayous. Almost daily sites are disappearing right from under our eyes. They are being buried by fill, leveled and otherwise destroyed. This constitutes a total loss of irreplaceable archeological material.

The laying of pipelines and gas lines, construction of roads and in particular the dredgings of bayou rectification and beautification projects threaten such a great number of sites in Harris County that we might consider ourselves in an emergency situation.

Along the water fronts we can count numerous sites in various stages of erosion, some having disappeared entirely, represented today by deposits of shell and occupational debris visible only during periods of low tide. Many of these shell middens were laid down in close proximity to the shorelines and are thus in precarious positions, on a constantly changing coastline. Floods, storms and unusual high tides each year take their toll, decreasing the number of sites at an alarming rate.

The continuous dredging operations of the Houston Ship Channel and subsequent pumping of spoils upon the low banks have obliterated a large number of waterfront sites. In addition, the erosion caused by large ocean-going vessels steaming through the narrow passageway within the channel has carried away whole bluffs, some of which contained shell stratas.

Within the past two years the writer has recorded the disappearance of two clam shell deposits because of erosion along the bank of the Houston Ship Channel (H.X.C. #5 & H.S.C. #6) Wayne B. Neyland (report in progress).

It is recommended that we devote our energies to salvage where it is urgently needed rather than in areas decades.

We as individuals or as a Society will receive less criticism for salvaging endangered material, which once lost may be forever lost, than for working on sites that may still exist a hundred years from today.

The sand, water and wind will not wait. We must decide now. A concerted effort is urgently needed immediately.

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HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

CHARTER MEMBERS

Mrs. H. W. Anderson
W. L. Atwood
Gordon F. Bailey
Charles G. Caldwell
Wm. P. Caskey
Mrs. Wm. P. Caskey
J. J. Dieckman
Alan R. Duke
Bruce R. Duke
Gary A. Duke
Damon C. Dunn
Charles Fleming
Mrs. Charles Fleming
Mike Fleming
Dr. Art Gallaher
Charles B. Gallenkamp
J. D. Harmier
K. P. Harmier

John Kalb
Val Larsen
Louis Lenz
Dr. Donald R. Lewis
Mrs. Donald R. Lewis
H. Mewhinney
Billy Moore
Wayne B. Neyland
Dwayne Neyland
John Payne
Elizabeth Pillaert
Roseline Pillaert
E. Raymond Ring
Mrs. E. Raymond Ring
Donald G. Siever
R. W. Stevenson
Norvill Wilson
R. B. Worthington

OFFICERS - 1959-1960

Wayne B. Neyland	-	Chairman
Alan R. Duke	-	Secretary-Treasurer
H. Mewhinney	-	Editor
R. B. Worthington	-	Director
Damon C. Dunn	-	Director
J. J. Dieckman	-	Director (Also Asst. Editor)

COMMITTEES

Artifacts Display

J. D. Harmier
K. P. Harmier

Program

Damon C. Dunn

Records

R. B. Worthington

Society "Dig"

Charles G. Caldwell
R. W. Stevenson
Gordon Bailey

Study Group

R. W. Stevenson

HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

REPORT OF SECRETARY-TREASURER

Report covers period from date of organization of H.A.S. through May 31, 1960 (end of fiscal year).

Balance on deposit, First National Bank of Pasadena,
on May 31, 1960 \$ 92.98

RECEIPTS

1959 Dues	\$169.00
1960 Dues	27.00
Contributions	35.00
Total Receipts	<u>\$231.00</u>

DISBURSEMENTS

Texas Archeological Society Dues	\$ 10.00
Oklahoma Anthropological Society Dues	3.50
Equipment Rental (Projector)	7.50
Recorder Tape	8.25
Postage and Stationary	52.02
Speakers' Fees and Associated Expenses	30.75
Supplies (Rubber stamp, membership cards, etc.)	7.50
Room Rental (Symposium, Annual Meeting)	15.00
Newsletter	3.50
Total Disbursements	138.02
Balance on hand May 31, 1960	<u>92.98</u>
Total to be accounted for	<u>\$231.00</u>

Alan R. Duke
Secretary-Treasurer