

THE NEWSLETTER

Of the Houston Archeological Society

PROPERTY OF THE  
HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Number 6

October, 1961

(Published from time to time. Chairman of the Society, Alan R. Duke. Editorial committee, H. Mewhinney, L. E. Aten, Ivan Newlin.)

**NEW OFFICERS**

The new officers of the Houston Archeological Society, to serve from September, 1961, to September, 1962, are: Chairman, Alan R. Duke; Secretary-Treasurer, Charles B. Fleming; Directors, Donald R. Lewis, Richard B. Worthington, Wayne B. Neyland.

The Nominating Committee for this election consisted of Norvil J. Wilson, Chairman, Art Gallaher, Jr., and H. Mewhinney.

Present committee members are: Program, Donald R. Lewis. Membership, W. P. Caskey. Editorial, H. Mewhinney, L. E. Aten, and Ivan Newlin.

**SOME IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS ON THE UPPER TEXAS GULF COAST**  
R. B. Worthington

Since Joe Ben Wheat's excellent work at Addicks in 1947, interested amateurs have tried to correlate his data with the information from more than 200 other known archaeological sites in Harris, Chambers, Galveston, Liberty, and Brazoria Counties.

Field surveys, reconnaissance, surface collections, and a small amount of published information seem to indicate that the situation is more complex than would appear from the three papers thus far published.

There are two basic kinds of sites in the area. The first consists of shell middens, found along the shallow bays and lakes. The other consists of sand middens, found along the running streams.

The two are alike in some traits, such as similar sorts of pottery, the projectile points, and the characteristic of splitting nearly all long bones of mammals. But there are several conspicuous differences.

The sand middens contain many flint artifacts, as well as numerous waste flakes, the latter indicating that tools and weapons were made on the scene.

Finished implements include projectile points, knives, drills, scrapers, and graters. The projectile points are much the most abundant.

There is little evidence that implements were made on the shell middens. Chipped implements of any kind are quite scarce, even though those that are found are much like those of the sand middens and are perhaps of precisely the same types. In some instances waste flakes are almost entirely lacking.

This evidence would seem to indicate that the flint implements in the shell middens got there by a process of trade or else that the same people lived at both kinds of sites, moving as the seasons changed, but worked flint only when living along streams.

Shell middens seem to contain more bone implements than the sand middens. But this comparative abundance may result merely from the fact that a soil with much shell in it would be alkaline enough to preserve bone longer than an acid soil.

The bone artifacts in the shell middens consist of awls made from the ulna of the deer, socketed projectile points made from the cannon bone of the deer, and awls also made from the cannon bones.

The peoples living at the two kinds of sites ate quite different foods.

At the shell middens there are large accumulations of clam and oyster shells. There are also many fish bones, gar scales, and possible alligator bones. All these are virtually absent from the sand middens.

At present sites of both kinds are considered to be of the Galveston Bay Focus; but there seem to be enough differences to justify two foci.

There may even be several foci. There were visits and temporary colonization by French traders and Spanish missionaries in the earlier half of the 1700's and thus there should be some sort of historical focus.

Written records indicate that most of this trading and missionary work was in Chambers County, in the general neighborhood of Wallisville. The precise site of the mission and presidio is not known but careful field work might find it.

At the north end of Turtle Bay in Chambers County there are the remains of tremendous shell middens which may perhaps contain evidence enough to establish a historical focus for the shell midden people. At present two glass beads from a burial at the Caplin site on Bolivar Peninsula in Galveston County are the only contact items indicating the existence of a historical focus. But unfortunately the Caplin site, because it differs in many ways from both the shell and the sand middens, is not considered a component of the Galveston Bay Focus. Nor is its relationship to the sites in that focus known.

In contrast with the sandy Goose Creek wares of the Galveston Bay Focus, one finds in the upper levels of both the sand and the shell middens some wares which are sherd-tempered, clay-grit-tempered, and possibly calcium-phosphate-tempered. They may eventually prove useful as time markers. As the writer suggested at the pottery symposium in Houston in late 1959, the presence of these wares and their seeming association with arrow points may mark the division between the late ceramic traditions of the Galveston Bay Focus and the historic period. These wares carry the suggested names of San Jacinto Plain and San Jacinto Incised.

Even the limits of this focus are not yet defined. As of the information now available, the Brazos River seems to be the western limit. That is, evidence from the Albert George Site in Brazoria County indicates still another undefined focus, while recent work at the Goebel Site in Austin County shows few traits of the Galveston Bay Focus.

The Houston Society's work at the Jamison Site in Liberty County seems to indicate the presence of Galveston Bay traits, as well as possible influence from the east and the north.

However, neither the materials from the Goebel Site nor those from the Jamison Site have yet been fully studied. In short, the limits of the Galveston Bay Focus are not known either to the east or to the north.

The presence of Palaeo-Indian points, such as Clovis, Meserve, Milnesand, and Plainview may indicate an earlier occupation of this area than has been suspected. Meserve points have been found at Westfield, at Addicks, and on the Houston Ship Channel near the San Jacinto Battleground, all in Harris County. A fragmentary Clovis point was found by Wheat at Addicks. Another was found on Green's Bayou. At least two Plainviews have been found in Harris County, one at Lynchburg and another at Golden Acres near Pasadena. A Milnesand point was found at the City of Houston Prison Farm on the Mykawa Road.

In conclusion, not enough information is yet available to permit proper definitions for the foci of this area, their relationships to one another, their relationships to foci toward the north, the east, and the west, or their time spans.

While the projectile points seem to show influence from Central Texas, the pottery influence seems to be from the southeast. A problem is posed by the presence of more burials at the Caplin Site than are known for the entire Galveston Bay Focus. While most Galveston Bay components have numerous potsherds, there were few at Caplin. Certainly more work needs to be done on the relationship of Caplin to the Galveston Bay Focus and to sites in Jefferson and Orange Counties.

The virtual destruction of the huge shell middens at the north end of Turtle Bay in Chambers County, when shell was hauled off to top county roads, shows that we cannot wait forever to solve our archaeological problems. The building of a salt water barrier near Wallisville as an adjunct for Houston's proposed lake on the Trinity may obliterate the Spanish mission site and all evidence for the historical focus. Many other sites are being ruined as industrial plants, highways, and housing developments are built.

#### RECENT SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

In a recently published article, Ripley P. Bullen, of the Florida State Museum, presents some new radiocarbon dates which, together with previous dates, firmly document the fiber-tempered pottery of Florida and Georgia as the earliest pottery north of Mexico\*. The earliest dates are 2090 and 2165 B.C., the latest is 1065 B.C. Several other dates for various phases of the period all fit neatly between those dates. With five sites represented, which are separated by hundreds of miles, the validity of the dates is difficult to dispute. The arguments heard from some quarters, that the first vessels used were of steatite, seems invalid. Most recent stratigraphic information assigns this ware to the Transitional Period between the Archaic and Early Woodland.

\*Radiocarbon Dates For Southeastern Fiber-Tempered Pottery, by Ripley P. Bullen. American Antiquity, Volume 27, Number 1, July, 1961.

-----

If the sites of the Spanish presidio and mission in the vicinity of the Trinity River are ever discovered, persons who possess sherds of the Spanish Olive Jar will find a valuable reference in the newly published study of that pottery by Dr. John M. Goggin, entitled The Spanish Olive Jar - An Introductory Study, published as Number 62 in Yale Publications in Anthropology, Yale University.

Goggin has divided the ware into Early, Middle and Late Styles with some sub-types, based on temper and wall thickness. He discusses the distribution throughout the Circum-Caribbean area and bases his dates on some amazingly exact data from Mexico and the West Indies.

-----

Those members interested in agriculture may or may not know that early agriculture has been suspected for some time in the Eastern Woodlands. Recently the earliest direct evidence of corn yet found in the Eastern United States was found at Site 9-GO-507 in northwest Georgia\*. A group of 30 to 40 burnt corn cobs were found, apparently thrown into a refuse pit. Although C-14 dates are not yet available, the feature has been assigned to either Component B or C of the newly defined Williams focus, which is part of the Georgia Deptford aspect and carries an approximate date of 400 B.C.

\*A Preliminary Report on 9-GO-507: The Williams Site, Gordon County, Georgia, by Dan and Phyllis Morse. The Florida Anthropologist, Volume XIII, Number 4, December, 1960.

## ROSTER

Members of the Houston Archeological Society, as of  
October, 1961, were:

Anderson, Mrs. H. W.	3710 Merrick, Houston	MO 5-4134
Aten, Lawrence E.	716 Marshall St.	JA 8-3315
Atwood, W. L.	501 Ruth, Baytown	
Bailey, Gordon F.	6002 Brady	WA 1-1240
Bickley, George W.	729 Skylark, Pasadena	HU 4-1793
Caldwell, Charles G.	702 S. Circle, Baytown	JU 3-3968
Caskey, William P.	P.O. Box 93, Bellaire	MA 3-2566
Caskey, Mrs. W. P.	"	"
Davis, K. R., Jr.	1804 Stuart Ave., Houston 4	JA 9-7014
Dieckman, J. J.	2637 Spruce, Bakersfield, Calif.	
Dieckman, Mrs. J. J.	"	
Duke, Alan R.	1706 Oaks Dr., Pasadena	GR 2-2954
Duke, Mrs. A. R.	"	"
Duke, Bruce R.	"	"
Duke, Gary A.	"	"
Dunn, Damon G.	5401 Nina Lee Lane, Houston	OV 2-4220
Fleming, Charles B.	3808 Gertin	
Fleming, Mrs. C. B.	"	
Fleming, Mike	"	
Frank, Mrs. W. R.	5200 Chestnut St., Bellaire	MO 5-6802
Gallaher, Dr. Art	5867 Heron Dr., Houston	RE 3-2674
Gallenkamp, C. B.	P.O. Box 22433, Houston 27	MO 7-8742
Harmier, J. D.	15521 Chaplin Rd., Houston	HI 2-4910
Harmier, K. P.	15539 Chaplin Rd., Houston	HI 2-6643
Hartman, H. F.	Box 3292, Baytown	LO 6-5983
Hartman, Mrs. H. F.	"	"
Hartman, Daniel	"	"
Heartfield, Lorraine	1385 - 23rd St., Beaumont	
Hester, Mary	1402 Prospeot, Houston 4	JA 8-6649
Hopkins, R. T., Jr.	6006 Fairdale Lane, Houston 27	SU 2-6973
Kalb, John	5580 Linbrook, Houston	MO 7-0756
Larsen, Val	1457 Curtin, Houston	OV 6-2412
Lenz, Louis	4390 Harvest Lane	JA 2-4791
Lewis, Donald R.	3642 Broadmead Dr., Houston	MO 7-0282
Lewis, Mrs. D. R.	"	"
Mewhinney, H.	c/o Houston Post, Houston	
Moore, Billy	8138 Lynn	MI 5-0015
Neyland, Wayne	4300 Walker	
Newlin, Ivan	246 Hollydale	HI 7-5844
Norbeck, Dr. Edward	Dept. of Anthropology and Sociology, Rice U., Houston 1	JA 2-9812
Norwood, Mrs. Pat	5508 Community Dr.	MO 7-2954
Pennington, Leslie	609 Circle Dr., Baytown	
Pillaert, Elizabeth	6421 Bayway Dr., Baytown	
Pillaert, Roseline	"	
Post, C. W., Jr.	5631 Sanford Rd., Houston 35	PA 9-9402
Ray, Frank	104 Kenwood Dr., Conroe	PL 6-3420
Ray, Mrs. Frank	"	"
Ring, E. R.	1216 Niels Esperson Building Houston 2	
Ring, Lavon	1102 Pugh, Galena Park	
Sewell, John B.	5226 Enyart, Houston 21	MI 9-2928
Siever, Donald G.	5525 Huisache, Houston	MO 4-0596
Vinson, Raymond	1209 Trimm, Pasadena	GR 2-2924
Vinson, Russell	"	"
Vinson, Stephen	"	"
Ware, Junior	506 E. Thomas, Pasadena	GR 2-5131
Watson, S. T.	1232-C Dove Lane, Greens Bayou Houston 15	
Wilson, Norvil J.	30 E. Shady Lane, Houston	SU 2-8286
Wilson, Mrs. N. J.	"	"
Worthington, R. B.	4216 Walker, Houston	CA 7-5620
<u>HONORARY MEMBERS</u>		
Jamison, J. R.	c/o Dayton State Bank, Dayton	
Jamison, J. T.	"	
Jamison, W. T., Jr.	"	
Jamison, Mrs. W. T., Jr.	"	