

NEWSLETTER

of the

HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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OFFICERS 1964-65

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 L. E. Aten

SITE SURVEYS IN THE LIVINGSTON RESERVOIR

During the 1963 - 64 Season

D. R. Lewis

The principal field activity of the Houston Archaeological Society during the past several months has been a survey of archaeological sites in the area which will be flooded when the Livingston Reservoir is completed in Polk, San Jacinto, Trinity and Walker Counties, Texas. The over-all program for this archaeological work is being supervised by Dr. Dee Ann Story of the Department of Anthropology, University of Texas as a part of the Texas Archaeological Salvage Project.

Because of the very large area to be covered in this survey, the members of the H. A. S. have been organized into six teams whose field work is co-ordinated by Damon Dunn. The captains of each team lead their team members in surveying and reporting on field activities. The team captains for the present season are:

Team No. 1 - Frank Ray	Team No. 4 - Charles F. Deane
" " 2 - L. D. Stewart	" " 5 - Wm. Caskey
" " 3 - Alan Duke	" " 6 - Norvil Wilson

The initial work in the field was oriented toward re-locating and evaluating some of the sites which had been previously located and reported by John P. Nunley. ("Appraisal of the Archaeological Resources of Livingston Reservoir", Report submitted to the National Park Services, May 1963.) In addition to re-locating most of these sites, many new sites have been found. Several of these appear to offer good possibilities for excavations in the coming seasons. A summary of the season's activities is being compiled and will be submitted to Dr. Story for co-ordinating excavation plans of the H. A. S. with the program of the Texas Archaeological Salvage Project.

This program was undertaken with a great deal of enthusiasm by many of our Society members. I am sure their enthusiasm was rewarded with valuable field experience and a good basis for additional site surveying and for our excavation program in future seasons in the Livingston Reservoir.

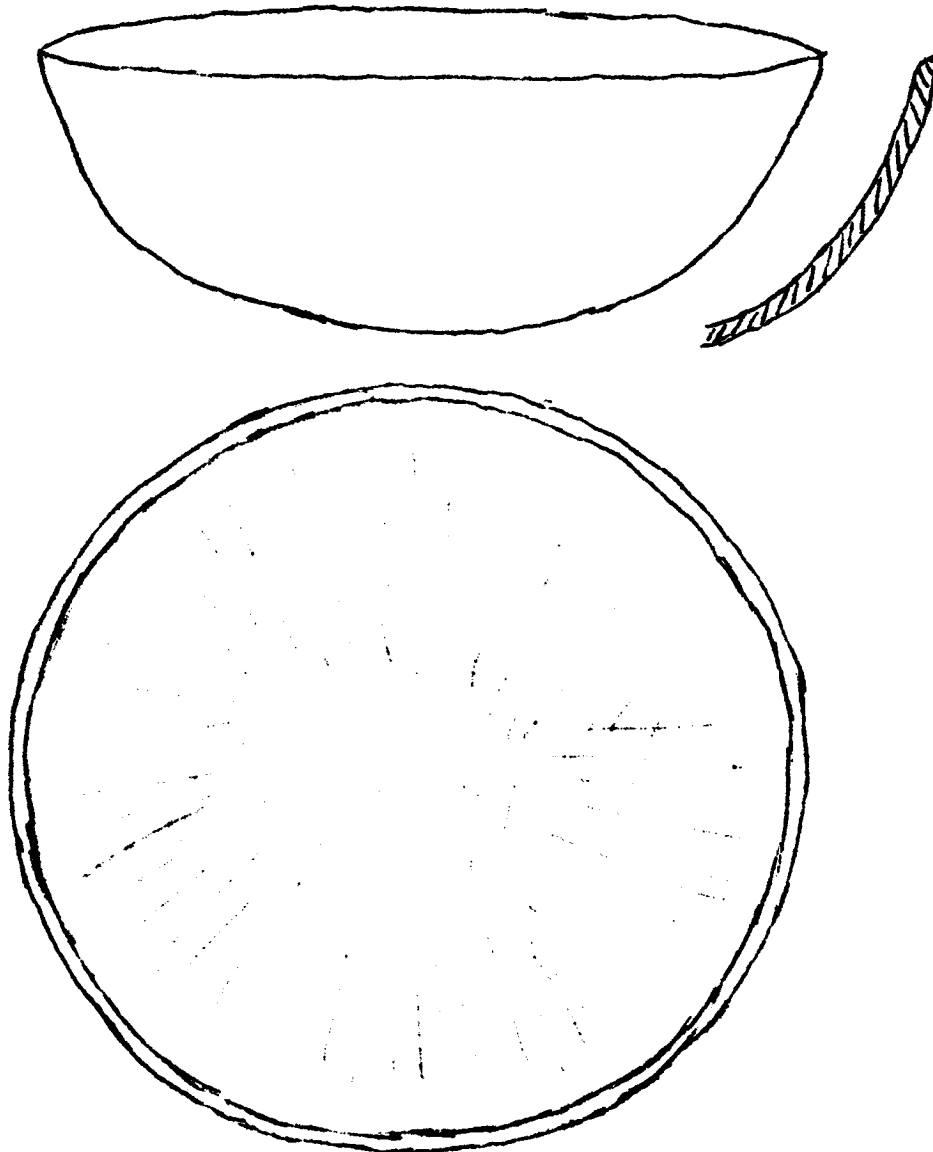
A POTTERY BOWL FROM PEGGY LAKE, HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

A. R. DUKE

While excavating a 3 foot x 3 foot test pit in a shell mound on Peggy Lake, Bruce and Gary Duke found a number of potsherds which, when re-assembled, formed a small bowl. The Goose Creek vessel was found at a depth of 12 inches in a shell layer whose present thickness is 15 inches.

The bowl is 6-5/8 inches wide across the rim, 2-1/4 inches deep and has a round bottom. Thickness at the rim is approximately 1/8 inch. There is no incising or other decorations.

Found in the pit along with the sherds comprising the bowl were a flint knife, 3 bone projectile points, 4 ulna spatulas, 1 antler flaking tool, a Perdiz point and a Kent point.



COMMENTS ON GULF COAST ARCHAEOLOGY

W. L. Atwood

The Galveston Bay area offers an opportunity for the professional archeologist not found elsewhere in North America. The amateur is in a position to contribute much information regarding the early inhabitants of this area, but his work is limited by lack of free time and ability to obtain radiocarbon datings. Dr. Waldo R. Wedel, Head Curator, Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, states in his letter to me dated March 21, 1963:

"What is needed is to get more professional work done in your section (1) in excavating and (2) in studying both skeletons and artifacts. The physical anthropologist wants populations not isolated or scattered individuals, for data on demography, nutrition, body-build, etc."

Take, for instance, the subject of stone cutting by aborigines. I have been unable to locate any published information showing that the Coastal tribes knew how to cut stone. I found no mention of it in Hubert Mewhinney's book, although other types of working stone is pretty well covered in his publication. It appears that stone cutting was practiced in this area prior to the introduction of pottery.

How long has pottery been in this area? The answer to this question is not available to me, or anyone else. A friend here in Baytown stated he obtained a dating through a professor at a Junior College in Wharton, which showed a piece of pottery he furnished this professor as being 6,000 years old. I am of the opinion that this date may be approximately correct. I personally have come across sherds found in middens in the Beaumont formation. I have found pottery at a level beneath elephant bones, and some associated with mastodon teeth. During the past week I came across sherds associated with fossilized oyster shells.

The age of the Beaumont formation is questionable. Some contend it is the Upper Pleistocene, and more than 37,000 years old. Geologists with the Louisiana State University state that sediment released from the Mississippi River during a break in a levee in the year 1722 at False River is now completely oxidized. This type of yellow clay resembles that of the Beaumont formation, or Prairie Terrace as it is called in Louisiana, so that it is difficult for an expert to state which is which. Add to these complications, frequently clay deposits are there as a result of wind action; hence, these are eolian deposits. In some instances eolian deposits have covered aboriginal mounds of the area.

This paper would not be complete without comments on radiocarbon dating of shell taken from middens. If the test is run on snail or Rangia shell, the possibilities of accuracy is far greater than if the test is run on oyster shell. A number of tests were run on material taken from the Spiro Mounds in Oklahoma, and the results were confusing to say the least. Such a variety of results were obtained that one has the choice of several dates to choose from as to the age of the Spiro mounds.

The same conditions prevail in some middens here. A test from oyster shells will show a far greater age than a test run on bone, or Rangia shell. This does not imply that the results were erroneous, but merely that the oyster shell was several thousand years old when brought to the midden.

If we are to date a midden by the type of clay it is in, then we have middens here more than 37,000 years old and which contain potsherds.

There is good reason to believe that the mastodon may have survived in this area until 3 or 4 thousand years ago. Their extinction may have been the result of Indians killing and utilizing the young elephants, as in some instances the size of the teeth, or bones, found in middens were considerably smaller than those of a mature animal.

SCOTTSBLUFF AT RED BLUFF

by George W. Bickley

Identification, by Dr. E. Mott Davis at the symposium on "Early Man in Texas", of a sixteen year old surface find establishes that the artifact is a Scottsbluff point. This, to the writer's knowledge, is the first reported find of this type in Harris County.

The location of the find is in southeast Harris County, near the community of Red Bluff, located four miles south of La Porte, Texas. The artifact was found on the slope of the bluff overlooking Galveston Bay.

The artifact is 9.9 cm. long and 3.5 cm. wide. It is colored yellow as the result of heavy patination. Small fractures at the basal corners, however, reveal the original brown color of the flint.

A HUMAN CRANIA FROM THE ADDICKS DAM BASIN,

Harris County, Texas

L. E. Aten

This brief note will summarize the archaeology and physical characteristics of a single human crania excavated by A. R. Duke from site 42/66A6-4 in the Addicks Dam basin.

Archaeologically, the remains were typical of those found by Joe Ben Wheat at the sites he excavated in the basin (Wheat, 1953). The bones were smashed and scattered in what presumably was a burial pit, although no pit outlines were evident in the midden soil.

Excavation at this site consists of two test pits dug by Wheat and one test pit dug by Duke. The details of Wheat's tests are available in his report on the Addicks basin. The stratigraphy of Duke's test is as follows (from Duke's notes):

	cm.
Dart point (one)	60.9
Lower limit of pottery	66.0
Long bones	71.1
Gary point (one)	76.2
Skull fragments	
(2'4" west of long bones)	76.2 - 106.8
Base of midden, yellow clay	approx. 110.0

The stratigraphy in Duke's test doesn't clearly reflect the chronology of the Addicks basin apparently because of the presence of the burial, but some observations may be made. The lower limit of the pottery occurrence may well indicate the upper limit of the burial pit and thus the time of burial. It also seems likely that the burial pit has artificially discontinued the vertical distribution of pottery in the excavated area and that the pottery originally continued to a greater depth. This would be similar to the situation Wheat found and would confine the burial to either the Middle or Upper level of the basin chronology.

Wheat found Upper level projectile point types above 45 cm. with Middle and Lower level types below this. In Duke's test, no points were found above 60.9 cm., with a dart point being found at that depth and a Gary Stemmed type is found throughout the Upper, Middle and Lower levels at Addicks, Wheat comments, "The Gary Stemmed Point is the most characteristic type of the Middle Levels" (Wheat, 1953, p. 204). We also note that the guide artifact to the Upper level, arrow points, are entirely absent.

Thus it seems likely, but is by no means proven, that the Duke test pit does conform to the general chronology in the Addicks basin and that the burial likely belongs to the Middle level of this chronology.

If this stratigraphic position is correct, the significance of the burial would be that it is the second from Addicks that can be assigned to the Middle level and contributes some additional information to that made available by Wheat's burial No. 1.

The bones examined consisted of a restored calotte, two fragments of the lower jaw, fragments of both femora and the midshaft portion of a tibia of an adult (26-33) male. Measurements (Table 1) indicate this was a round-headed individual. No deformation was observed. Other morphological observations include medium development of supraorbital ridges, mastoids and sagittal crest. The lower jaw appears to be large, of medium strength, with a square chin of medium protrusion. Both lower first molars exhibit third degree wear while the other molars show only second degree wear. Both molar segments show diagonal wear with the heaviest on the lingual surfaces.

Stature was estimated from the tibia fragment using the method described by Krogman (1939), with a result of 169 cm.

There are no immediate similarities between the remains excavated by Wheat (Newman, 1953) and those excavated by Duke. In view of the paucity of information available, it is fruitless to speculate on the physical characteristics of the Addicks population. This must await much additional information.

Table 1. Measurements

Antero-posterior diameter, max.				<u>176</u>
Lateral diameter, max.				<u>(143) *</u>
Cranial Index				<u>(81.1)</u>
Thickness of left parietal (T-P suture)				<u>(6)</u>
Lower jaw:				
Height of symphysis				<u>(31)</u>
Thickness at M2	right	<u>17</u>	left	<u>17.5</u>
Length of molar segment	(lower)			
	right	<u>34</u>	left	<u>34</u>
Breadth of molars	(lower)right		left	
	M1	<u>11.5</u>		<u>11.5</u>
	M2	<u>12</u>		<u>11</u>
	M3	<u>11</u>		<u>10.5</u>
Thickness at internal occipital protuberance				<u>14</u>

* () close estimate - all measurements in mm.

References

- Krogman, W. M.
1939. A Guide to the Identification of Human Skeletal Material.
F. B. I. Law Enforcement Bulletin, Vol. 8, No. 8. Washington
- Newman, Marshall T.
1953. Indian Skeletal Remains from the Doering and Kobs Sites, Addicks Reservoir, Texas. River Basin Surveys Papers, No. 4, Pt. II.
BAE Bull. No. 154. Washington.
- Wheat, Joe Ben
1953 An Archeological Survey of the Addicks Dam Basin, Southeast Texas. River Basin Surveys Papers, No. 4, Pt. I. BAE Bull. No. 154. Washington.

FINANCIAL REPORT

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

CALENDAR YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1963

ASSETS

Cash - - - \$273.97 (Fidelity Bank and Trust Company)

Balance - \$284.27 (As of April 10, 1964)

LIABILITIES

None

Mrs. Louise W. (William) Caskey
Secretary-Treasurer

LIBRARY REPORT

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Bulletin of the Texas Archaeological Society, Vol. 30 - 34.

"Prehistoric Man in Early America", edited by Jennings and Norbeck

This publication is based on a symposium held at Rice University during its 1963 Semi-Centennial celebration. The library copy was presented by the provost of Rice University, Dr. Carey Croneis, in recognition of the efforts and contributions of the Houston Archeological Society members in making the symposium a memorable success.

LIBRARY PROCEDURE

Because of the increasing size of the H.A.S. library, it was agreed at the December meeting that the librarian would only bring newly acquired publications to the regular monthly meetings. Members desiring to check out publications should contact the librarian either by mail before meetings or at meetings and she will have these publications brought to the following regular meeting.

HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Additional Members Joined Since Newsletter - Number 10

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Miss Nancy Deane	4704 Welford Drive	Bellaire,	Texas	MO 8-9115
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Mrs. Theran L. Ebner	3111 Knoll	Houston,	Texas	HO 5-9269
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Mrs. Robert A. Jircik	2016 Swift	Houston,	Texas	JA 4-3719
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Mrs. Buck Johnson	802 Littlejohn	Pasadena,	Texas	GR 2-5248
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Mrs. H. L. Middleton, Jr.	1908 Jessie Lane	Pasadena,	Texas	GR 2-5452
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Mrs. Luella Pickworth	105 E. Bird Rd.	Pasadena,	Texas	HU 7-1058
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Lonnie Stewart	7646 Greendowns	Houston,	Texas	
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