

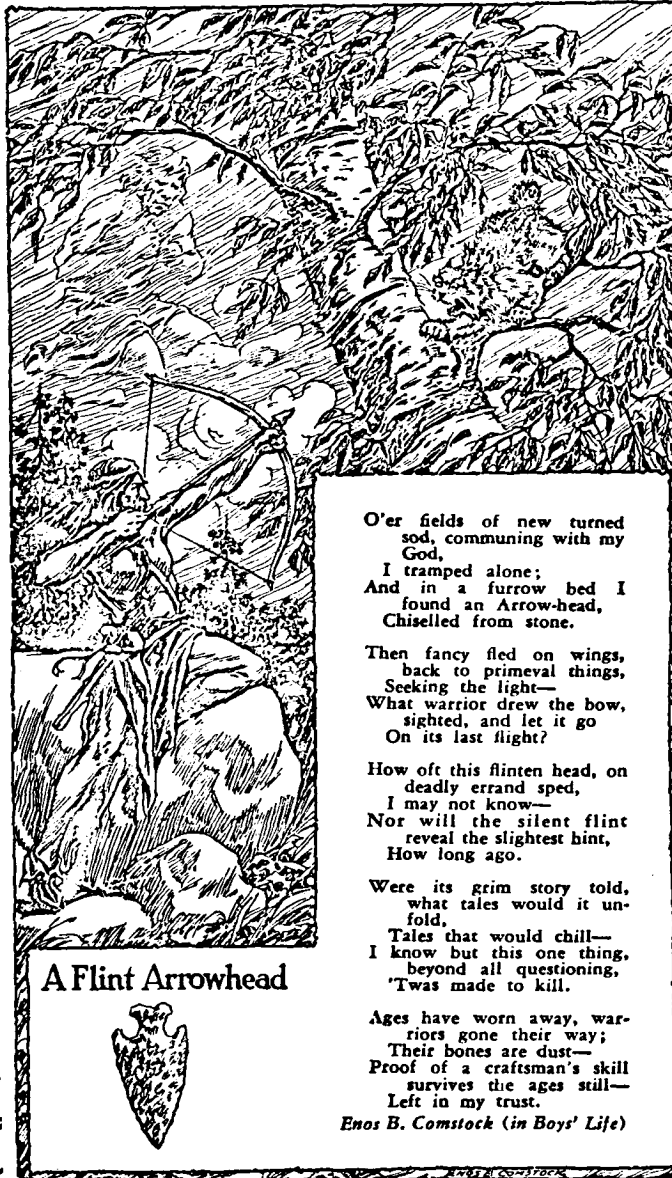
NEWSLETTER

of the

HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Number 16

January 1966



A Flint Arrowhead



O'er fields of new turned
sod, communing with my
God,
I tramped alone;
And in a furrow bed I
found an Arrow-head,
Chiselled from stone.

Then fancy fled on wings,
back to primeval things,
Seeking the light—
What warrior drew the bow,
sighted, and let it go
On its last flight?

How oft this flinten head, on
deadly errand sped,
I may not know—
Nor will the silent flint
reveal the slightest hint,
How long ago.

Were its grim story told,
what tales would it un-
fold,
Tales that would chill—
I know but this one thing,
beyond all questioning,
'Twas made to kill.

Ages have worn away, war-
riors gone their way;
Their bones are dust—
Proof of a craftsman's skill
survives the ages still—
Left in my trust.

Enos B. Comstock (in *Boys' Life*)

The Newsletter is published four times per year by the Houston Archeological Society. Contributions of news items, short articles and information of archeological significance should be sent to the Editor - Alan R. Duke, 1706 Oaks Drive, Pasadena, Texas 77502.

+ + + + +

Officers 1965-66

Chairman - William Fullen, 717 Dartmouth, Deer Park, Texas
Sec.-Treas.- Miss Shirley Thompson, 3816 Ruskin Street
Houston, Texas
Directors - Alan R. Duke
William Caskey
Donald R. Lewis

+ + + + +

Front Cover

The sketch and poem are the work of an old friend of your Editor. Perhaps some of you may have entertained similar thoughts under the same circumstances.

+ + + + +

Past and Future Programs

November 1965 - Dr. Frank Hole discussed his findings and showed slides of his exciting work in Iran during the summer of 1965.

December 1965 - Rice University students (John Durham, Bruce Grove, Joy Oppenheim and Barbara Stark) presented interesting talks on their experiences on archeological expeditions in various parts of the world.

January 1966 - Curtis Tunnell, State Archeologist, discussed the functions, problems and goals of his office. Curtis advises us that we can help him by contacting him when sites are in danger of destruction and by advising him of sites in our area which may be worth preserving for posterity.

Included in his future plans are the preservation of several representative prehistoric sites of each type (shell mounds, temple mounds, etc.) throughout the state. Plans also include restoration of historic sites such as forts and presidios.

II

Literature on State Archeology will be distributed to the public and talks and illustrated lectures will be available also to interested groups.

February 1966 - J. Richard Ambler, Executive Director, Texas Archeological Salvage Project will discuss the Wallisville project and show slides concerning other current TASP work

March 1966 - A review of progress on the Wallisville Survey and "Dig".

+ + + + +

Information on Goose Creek Red Film Pottery Needed:

Lawrence Aten would appreciate receiving any information available on specimens of "red film" pottery found in this general area. He needs this information in conjunction with the Dayton Site report. Contact him if you have found any sherds of this type or if you have sherds you think may be "red film".

Incidentally, we must compliment Lawrence for his fine article on "Five Crania from the Jamaica Beach Site" recently published in the TAS Bulletin No. 36.

+ + + + +

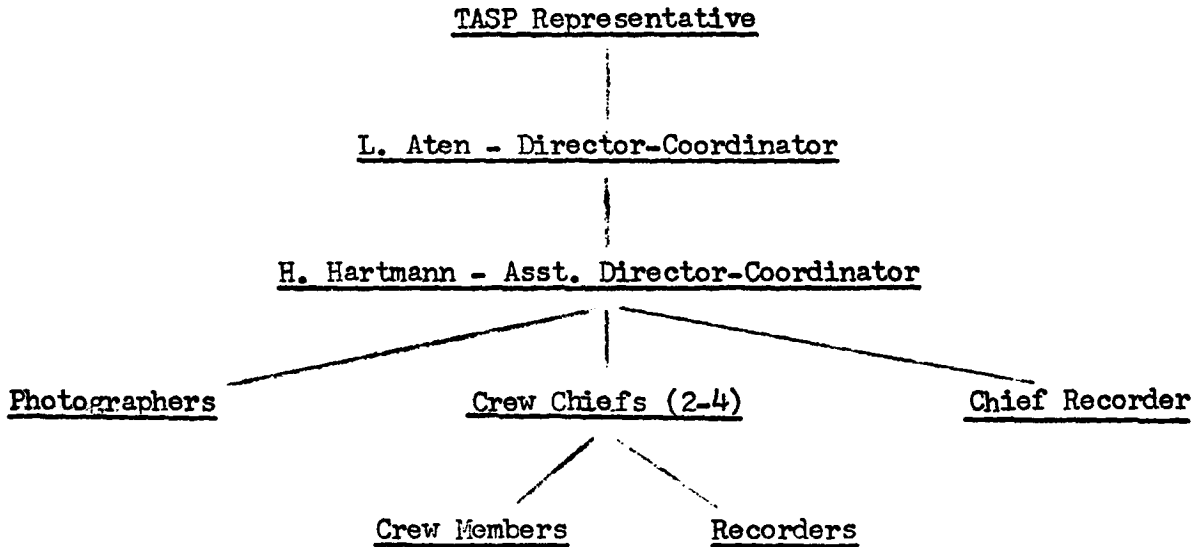
Future Activities of the H.A.S.

Our field program now includes a Survey and "Dig" in the Wallisville area and continuation of the Livingston survey. All will be under the general direction of the Texas Archeological Salvage Project.

Wallisville Survey - Bill Caskey will be coordinator of this work and will organize the teams who will make the survey. This work will start immediately. Bill will be in touch with you if you checked this activity on your questionnaire.

Wallisville "Dig" - Lawrence Aten will be coordinator and Harry Hartmann will be assistant coordinator. Work will start February 12. Briefly, the organization will function as follows:

III



Additional information will be supplied at our February meeting and at a laboratory session in early February after your Board of Directors and Coordinators meet with Dick Ambler on January 29 and look over the proposed site. Members will be notified on date and location of lab session.

Your Editor, recognizing that many of our members have not worked on a shell midden and may not be familiar with the Trinity Indians, did a little research and studied his field notes and artifacts and came up with this brief review of the former inhabitants of the area:

INDIANS OF THE TRINITY

Knowledge of the prehistory and history of any area in which archeological work is carried out can make the job more meaningful and interesting to the participants. Comparison of the cultural material with artifacts from other sites nearby will assist in establishing the cultural affiliations of the former inhabitants.

The current site survey and the proposed excavation of a shell midden along the Trinity River by the Houston Archeological Society (under TASP guidance) is no exception. Briefly, here are a few facts concerning the former inhabitants of the area and their sites:

The tribes of the lower Trinity River and the eastern shores of Trinity and Galveston Bays were generally considered Atakapan. This general term encompasses a group of tribes classed as belonging to the Southeast culture but who also had much in common with the Karankawa of the Central and Western Gulf. The Akokisas lived on the lower Trinity, the Bidais further north in the Trinity valley and the Deadoses to the north of the Bidai. The coastal area between the Sabine and Brazos Rivers is considered the Galveston Bay Focus.

IV

INDIANS OF THE TRINITY (Cont'd)

The akokisa, who occupied the area in which our survey and excavation will be carried out, were hunters, gatherers and fishermen. There is no evidence of agriculture and all signs point to a nomadic existence influenced by the seasons and the food supply. Their location along the coast led to a way of life very similar to the Karankawa. They used dugout canoes and were experts with the fish spear.

They also used brushwood traps for catching fish in tidal lagoons and used dried herbs which when thrown in the water stupified the fish. Shellfish were dragged from shell bottoms with two stout poles with a vine net at the pole ends. Historic accounts seem to indicate a definite taste for "long pig" also.

Little evidence is left of the dwellings used by the Akokisa. Brush or skin huts were used - sometimes on top of the shell heaps or middens. Social status dictated who lived on the "high ground".

Pottery found in the survey area will most certainly represent an intermingling of cultures. The coastal tribes manufactured pottery but also obtained some by trade from other tribes. Goose Creek - Plain and Incised - Coles Creek, Tchfuncte and other types will certainly be found. Pottery of Caddoan origin and possible some resembling Rockport may be uncovered.

Bone artifacts such as awls, fish hooks, antler flaking tools, beads and pins may be found.

Flint artifacts will include arrowpoints, darts and scrapers. Perdiz points probably will predominate. Occasionally other lithic artifacts may be found such as boatstones, sandstone abraders, etc.

Shell artifacts such as hammers, gouges, awls, net weights, scrapers, pendants and beads may be present. Asphalt, either on the pottery or in the form of lumps will probably appear.

Sites in this area are general clam and oyster shell middens of varying depth. Some may be as deep as 15 feet but most will not be more than 1 - 4 feet high. Some of the sites will be so extensive as to be essentially continuous for perhaps 400 - 500 feet or longer. Others will be quite small and in case of high water may be entirely covered.

One thing is certain - digging is not easy in a shell midden. The densely packed shell makes it difficult to maintain levels and to avoid damage to shell and bone artifacts. All shells and shell fragments must be examined carefully since some will be artifacts. Large quantities of fish, bird and animal bone may be present with an occasional human burial thrown in for good measure. Shell middens rarely show stratification although there may be some gradations in color. It would be particularly significant if the remains of post holes could be found. This could be a clue to dwelling

INDIANS OF THE TRINITY (Cont'd)

structure - a rare occurrence in a shell midden of the Gulf coast.

Livingston Survey - Lou Fullen will act as coordinator. This will be a continuation of the present survey with emphasis on certain neglected areas. Here is a report from Lou on the recent excavation at 41SJ19:

The Houston Archeological Society, under the direction and supervision of The Texas Archeological Salvage Project, has concluded the site excavation work at 41SJ19.

This dig was conducted under the direction of Mr. Burney McClurkan of the TASP who will write the Salvage Project report on this site.

Work on this site began on October 9, continuing on Saturdays and Sundays until December 19. An adequate sampling of the site was obtained by profiling a 100 ft. long trench dug by the "backhoe" across the site, and excavating 19 squares 5 ft. on a side to an average depth of 3 ft. Numerous artifacts were discovered, recorded, and bagged for the T.A.S.P. while our members received valuable instruction and training in the business of salvage archeology. A high point in the activities for our group was our participation in the recording and removal of the last 2 of 5 burials from site 41PK8 that the T.A.S.P. was excavating.

Plans are being made for a field trip for the H.A.S. to the Balcones Research Center at Austin where the material, collected by the T.A.S.P., is analyzed. Mr. McClurkan has offered to conduct a tour of the center when his analysis of the site material from Livingston Reservoir nears completion.

T.A.S.P. plans to return to Livingston next fall and our society has been invited to assist them in site excavation work at this time. Meanwhile the the H.A.S. will continue their site survey program at Livingston adding to the knowledge of the archeology of the area.

+ + + + +

Newsletter Exchange

We are exchanging Newsletters with a number of local societies in Texas. The following are available thru our librarian:

The Artifact - Newsletter of the El Paso Archeological Society

Midland Archeological Society Newsletter

South Plains Archeological Society Newsletter

Pena Pow-Wow - Carrizo Springs High School Archeological Society

+ + + + +

New Members

A "Welcome Aboard" to the following:

Mr. & Mrs. J. Kosmo - 9333 Tally Ho, Apt. 25, Houston
Mr. & Mrs. Charles K. Chandler - 1151 Camboard, Houston

+ + + + +

Recommended Reading

A Stripped Down, Basic, Elementary Dig - E. Mott Davis - Oklahoma Archeological Society Newsletter Vol. 13, No. 8, November 1965. Good advice to the amateur about digging a site.

Some Pointers on Field Photography - Ed. Jelks - Oklahoma Anthropological Society Newsletter, Vol. 13, No. 9, December 1965. How to take good pictures and avoid mistakes in photographing archeological features.

Topographical Description of Texas - George W. Bonnell. Written in 1940 by an early emigrant to Texas, this is a description of the topography and people of Texas in the late 1830's. One chapter is devoted to the Indian Tribes of Texas including accounts of early settlers concerning contacts with the Indians. Texian Press.

Texas Archeological Society Bulletin - Vol. 36 - 1965

A "must" for archeologist in Texas. Available in the H.A.S. library or can be purchased for \$5.00 from Texas Archeological Society, Austin, Texas. If you are a T.A.S. member, it is yours for the price of membership.

+ + + + +

A.R.D.