NEWSLETTER

of the

HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Number 32 April 1970

"It is both significant and noteworthy that the trends which characterize archaeological development today are in those aspects which pertain to analysis of the data following excavation. Excavation, integration, and inference, the three levels of archaeological research, have developed in that order. Excavation and its techniques were the first to receive attention and refinement; this was followed by a period when various integrative methods were devised, and only recently have the inferential aspects of archaeology been the object of the attention and development devoted to the other elements of the discipline. Since the ultimate end of all archaeology is the fleshing out in cultural terms of the basic data, we can confidently expect new and sophisticated emphasis on the aspects of inference to produce exciting results in the very near future. It is through such inference, done with imagination and insight, that archaeology takes its proper place within the field of anthropology and the social sciences. If it does not occupy such a status at this moment, we can be confident that it will in the very near future."

--- James Deetz, Professor of Anthropology
University of California
From his book "Invitation to Archaeology".

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.

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Directors - Alan R. Duke
Charles K. Chandler
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Front Cover

Webster defines inference as "the act of judging one thing by another" or "a logical conclusion from facts". Modern computers are helping archeologists establish sound imaginative inferences by articulating data with ethnographic information.

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Past and Future Programs

March - 1970 - Robert A. Vines, author of "Native Trees, Shrubs and Woody Vines of the Southwest" presented an interesting lecture on the plants of the Gulf Coast with special emphasis on their use and value to the Indians.

April - 1970 - This meeting will be devoted to a discussion of the archeological program and activities of the HAS. Emphasis will be placed on individual participation in the various activities of the Society.

Alan Duke will present a brief talk on Goose Creek pottery.

May - 1970 - Dr. Frank Hole, Rice University, will lecture on his recent work in Iran.

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Highway Salvage

We understand the State is planning to hire a Salvage Archeologist and that highway salvage plans for the HAS will be formulated after the Salvage Archeologist is functioning. Our plans for this work, therefore, must wait until a later date. Plenty of field work for all however with the Wallisville (Mission) work and the Clear Lake survey.

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Clear Lake City Salvage Project

The Houston Archeological Society will begin a survey on Saturday, April 11, 1970 of some 30,000 acres north of Clear Lake. This is the first phase of a salvage project directed toward obtaining archeological information on sites in this area. Industrial and residential development will destroy many of these sites in the near future so time is short! Through the cooperation of the landowner, the Friendswood Development Corporation, we have obtained permission for HAS members to conduct the salvage project. The F.D.C. is also supplying aerial photos and topographic maps of the area. The survey is expected to last for at least five weeks.

The Salvage Project organization will be as follows:

Coordinator - Wayne Neyland
Advisor - Dr. Frank Hole
Crew Chiefs - Bill McClure, Chris Chrisco, Alan Duke, Bill Caskey and Mike O'Brien.

Members interested in working on the survey will meet at 9:00 A.M. on Saturday, April 11, 1970 at the Bay Area Harris Co. Park on Bay Area Drive (Middle Bayou). Actual survey will start at 10:00 A.M. after a briefing on the work to be performed. We must enter the area as a group because of locked gates, etc. so be there early! Only HAS Members may participate.

Some of the terrain may be muddy and overgrown so it is recommended that boots or hiking shoes be worn and other apparel be suitable for walking through brush. Mosquito repellent is a must! Further information will be available at our April meeting..

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Boy's School Site - Clear Lake

Lawrence Aten conducted another week of work on the Boy's School Site from March 20 through March 28 with HAS members assisting. Five additional burials were located in the large shell site (41HR80). One of these burials, that of a small child, contained grave goods (shell beads).

Work in the sandy field near the shell midden did not reveal evidence of paleo occupation. The Plainview point found earlier in this area suggested this possibility and when deeper excavation can be made (limited by high water table during recent work) perhaps other paleo material may be found.

Excavations did reveal an oyster shell lens on the edge of the Rangia shell midden (41HR85). A perforated canine tooth, potsherds, dart points and bone fragments were found in this lens which appears to be older than the Rangia shell midden.

Testing was started on another shell site (41HR86) north of 41HR85.

Lawrence has approval and funds to work another week on the Boy's School location - possibly in early June. HAS members are invited and details will be supplied later.

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Presidio San Agustin de Ahumada (41CH57)

Work is proceeding satisfactorily at this site. Several additional architechural features have been located. The extent of the site has been determined in three directions and limits on the west side will be defined shortly.

A detailed report on the site, by Lou and Margie Fullen, will appear in the next issue of this Newsletter after identification and lab work has been completed.

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News From Other Societies

The El Paso Archeological Society has located over a dozen sites adjacent to, or in danger of destruction by highway construction and has reported these sites to the Texas Historical Committee for use in establishing a Highway Salvage Program.

The Chavez County Jr. Archaeological Society, Roswell, New Mexico, has a project under way that entails collection, identification and display of potsherds from all parts of the United States. Head of the Society, Major Jack Ross, U.S.A.F. Ret., would appreciate donation or exchange of representative sherds for the project. Your Editor has forwarded some Goose Creek sherds to Major Ross so the upper Gulf Coast is represented in the Chavez County project. Also received, unexpectedly, some beautiful, well labeled, dated, West Texas and New Mexican sherds in return. If you would like to donate some sherds to the project, Major Ross' address is: 927 Davidson Drive, Roswell, N.M. 88201.

The Midland, South Plains and Lower Plains Archeological Societies, conducted Highway right-of-way surveys for the Texas State Historical Survey Committee. The Midland Archeological Society will host the annual Texas Archeological Society meeting in November 1970.

The Southwest Federation of Archaeological Societies held their 6th Annual Symposium at the University of Texas at El Paso on April 3, 4, and 5.

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New Additions to Library

Bill Caskey has donated the following books:

Rock Art of the Texas Indians - W. W. Newcomb, Jr. University of Texas Press.

Indians of Texas in 1830 - Jean Louis Berlandier. Smithsonian Press.

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Here is a report from Tommie Hester on a paleo point from the Corpus Christi area.

A FOLSOM POINT FROM THE LOWER TEXAS COAST

Thomas Roy Hester

ABSTRACT

A Folsom fluted point from near Corpus Christi, on the lower Texas coast, is documented.

INTRODUCTION

This brief note describes a Folsom specimen found in the vicinity of Oso Creek, south of Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas. Folsom points are extremely rare on the Texas littoral, and I am unaware of any other documented examples. They are occasionally found in the interior regions of the Texas coastal plain (Hester,1968; msl.).

The specimen recorded here was found by Mrs. Elwood Hess (of Corpus Christi) in a plowed field atop a bluff overlooking Oso Creek, in the Flour Bluff area. Near the mouth of Oso Creek, and for some distance upstream, archeological sites line both sides of the stream. They are often on clay dunes (see Price,1963), and erosion has exposed debris attributable to Archaic and Neo-American occupations. Late Paleo-Indian projectile points (including Plainview and Angostura) are known at a few sites on the creek (Stanton and Hester,1968; Hess collection; notes in author's files).

THE SPECIMEN

The Folsom point from Oso Creek is made of a dull, dark reddish-maroon chert, somewhat grainy in texture. It has a rather battered and worn appearance, but smoothing is still evident along the basal edge and a portion of one lateral edge (Fig. 1, a,a'). It is bifacially fluted and retains a nipple-like projection (striking platform for flute removals) at the center of the base. Parallel flaking is present, and it is possible that the specimen may have been reworked at the distal tip. Length is 31 mm., maximum width is 21.5 mm., and basal width is 20 mm. Maximum thickness is not known. Flute lengths are 17 and 19 mm.

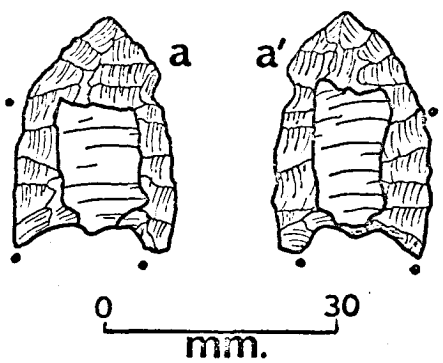

Fig. 1. Folsom Point from the Corpus Christi Vicinity.

Dots indicate extent of smoothing.

SUMMARY

This isolated surface find from the Corpus Christi area is another bit of evidence of early Paleo-Indian occupation on the Texas coast. A number of Clovis points are known from the coast (Sellards,1940; Suhm, Krieger and Jelks,1954; Hester,ms.), but it is difficult to understand why Folsom points are so rare. The author would appreciate information on other known Folsom specimens from the coastal plain.

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