THE NEWSLETTER

Of the Houston Archaeological Society

(Published from time to time, as the circumstances may dictate. Letters or papers may be sent to the acting editor, H. Newhinney, at the Houston Post.)

Number 5

June, 1961

AN EDITORIAL PREFACE

With no intent to exert any undue influence on the members of the Society, the acting editor---for no one else seems to be acting in any regular manner---would nevertheless ask this opportunity to offer a few suggestions for the publication of this Newsletter:

(1) We ought to quit changing its name every second or third time we publish it.

(2) We would do well to abandon fancy headings, attempts to imitate the make up of the daily newspapers, etc.

(3) Contributors should eschew the polysyllabic jargon which, with disordered syntax, is unhappily so common in the writings of professional archaeologists.

(4) We need more preliminary reports on work in progress. Detailed and extended papers are more suitable for publication by the Texas Society.

(5) Papers for this newsletter need not be limited to work done in excavating sites. If some member wishes to indulge in comment or debate: Let him do so.

UNUSUAL ARTIFACTS FROM SITE 41AU1, AUSTIN COUNTY, TEXAS

A. R. Duke

A cache of 65 flint flakes, all suitable for flaking into arrowpoints, was found at the 19-inch level at site 41AU1, Austin County, Texas.

The flakes, found by Ruth Duke, were in a space of four by four inches and were pressed together tightly. Flakes ranges in size from about two and a half inches to an inch and a quarter in length and all were less than half an inch thick. Width varied widely from half an inch to two and a half inches. There were no small chips near the flakes. One finished, broken artifact was found with the flakes. This was a thin tapered point, about two and three-quarters inches long, similar to a Pandora point.

A bone fishhook, made from the toe bone of a deer, was found at 11 inches by Gary Duke. The hook is an inch and a quarter long and the distance between the hook and shank is a quarter of an inch. The hook has a needle point and is highly polished. A search of literature indicates that reports of fishhooks found in this area are rare.

A POSTSCRIPT TO DUKE'S REPORT

H. Mewhinney

As your editorial committeeman, I will take the liberty of adding some comments to our fellow-member A. R. Duke's report on the cache of 65 flakes.

Finds of this sort are extremely rare in this part of the country, although on the Edwards Plateau, where flint is abundant, waste flakes and irregularly shaped cores can be picked up by the tons of millions.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Duke can be persuaded to study the literature in detail and write a much fuller report---and especially a fully illustrated one---for some publication rather more august than this little Newsletter.

Although an enormous amount of work has been done of the typology of projectile points in many parts of North America,

little has been written on the probable methods of making them. And that little abounds in errors. Many trained archaeologists are still so deluded as to believe that the dart points of the Archaic stage were often made from cores rather than from flakes.

The basic craftsmanship involved in making any sort of flint projectile point---whether so fantastically delicate and symmetrical as the finest specimens of Folsom work, or whether merely serviceable---consists in the ability to strike off the original flake from which the point itself is later shaped.

If the workman starts with a thick and lopsided flake---and all the more so if he starts with a core---he can never make even a half-way-symmetrical projectile point out of it.

Not that the workman needs a flake so handsome as some of the finest of the lamellar flakes. But he must have a flake that is reasonably thin and reasonably flat. If the flake is L-shaped, S-shaped, or pothook-shaped in cross-section, the workman is simply wasting his time.

That is to say, in the find made by the Dukes we have a glimpse of the actual aboriginal manufacturing process, of the workman at his work, of the suff he needed to start with. A man making a table has to start with planks; and a man making projectile points has to start with flakes.

A LARGE POT

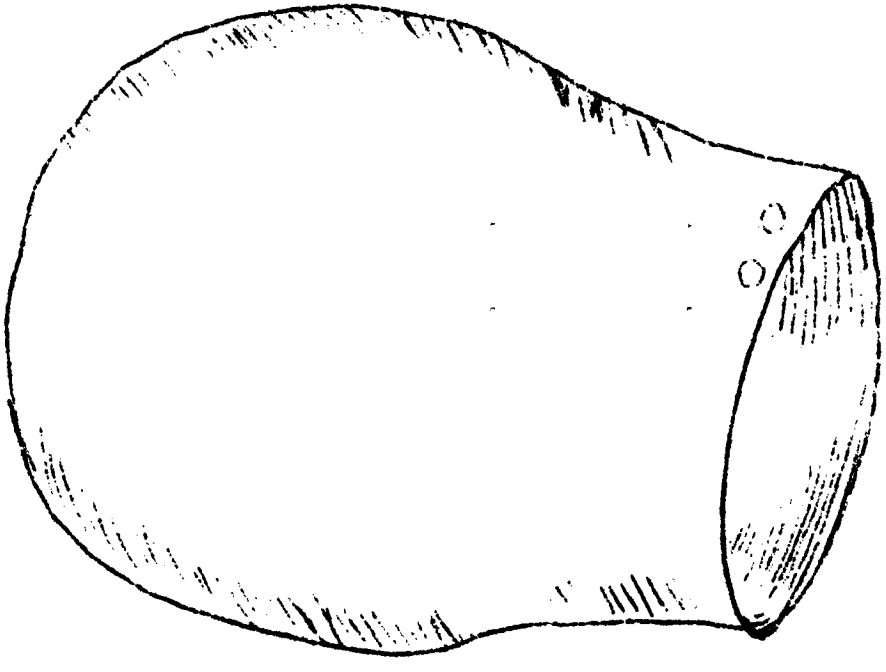
Danny Hartman

About March 1, I went to a midden on the southeast shore of Burnet Bay, that Mr. Caldwell had told me about. This midden is on the edge of Lot 104 on Bayshore Drive, where a slough comes into Burnet Bay. There have been nine arrowheads and many pieces of pottery found here, that I know of.

After a little excavation around the midden, I struck a piece of pottery. While uncovering this rather large piece, I found more that I thought belonged to the same pot. The ground there is black gumbo and full of clamshells. The tide was rather high that day and as I dug, the water started seeping

into the hole, so I quit with about half of the pot in large and small pieces. After about five more trips to the midden I had got all the pieces I now have, which is about eight or nine tenths of the whole thing. The hole all the pieces came out of was about three feet in diameter and went to a depth of no more than eighteen inches.

The rim of the pot, which is complete, is slightly scalloped and 656 milimeters in circumference. There are two, 3 milimeter holes 16 milimeters apart, that have been placed about 13 milimeters below the rim. From the rim, the sides slope in a little, then spread to a circumference of 814 milimeters. There is a sort of knob of clay somewhat off center on the bottom of the pot. The depth is 309 milimeters. The outside of the pot is without markings and the inside shows quite heavy lines or ridges, indicating the use of fingers or perhaps a brush for shaping. The color varies from black to gray or brown, though on the inside are pinkish tones. In all, we found about 140 pieces, varying in size from about 18 square inches to $\frac{1}{2}$ square inch.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY-HOSTETER CREEK NUMBER 1

This site was discovered in the winter of 1959 as I was exploring the northeast part of Montgomery County for new sites. At the confluence of two small streams about 100 yards upstream from their entrance into Hosteter Creek, there is a loamy knoll that can be reached at mid-winter only by carefully picking your step through a narrow, shallow swamp. The knoll rises to a crest of probably five feet and is approximately seventy-five yards from stream to stream. There are numerous gopher mounds in the area, with dirt varying from light brown to almost black. The mounds are rich in pressure flakes, with an occasional sherd being found. Two broken points have been recovered from them. About four years ago (1956) the trees were dozed down and pushed into the swamp. Three test pits, six square feet each, were dug last year and 10 to 15 fairly good points of varying descriptions were taken. Otherwise the site has been undisturbed.

On February 3, 1961, the Frank Rays and the Dr. Don Lewis family, both members of the Houston Archaelogical Society, started an organized approach toward gathering useful information on this site. After first getting permission from Mr. Westmoreland of Willis, Texas, who is in charge of the land, we made the following observations and procedures:

1) A generally north and south fence divided the knoll in half and we had access to only the west half.
2) We established true north as being about 15 degrees to the right of the fence line as we looked northerly.

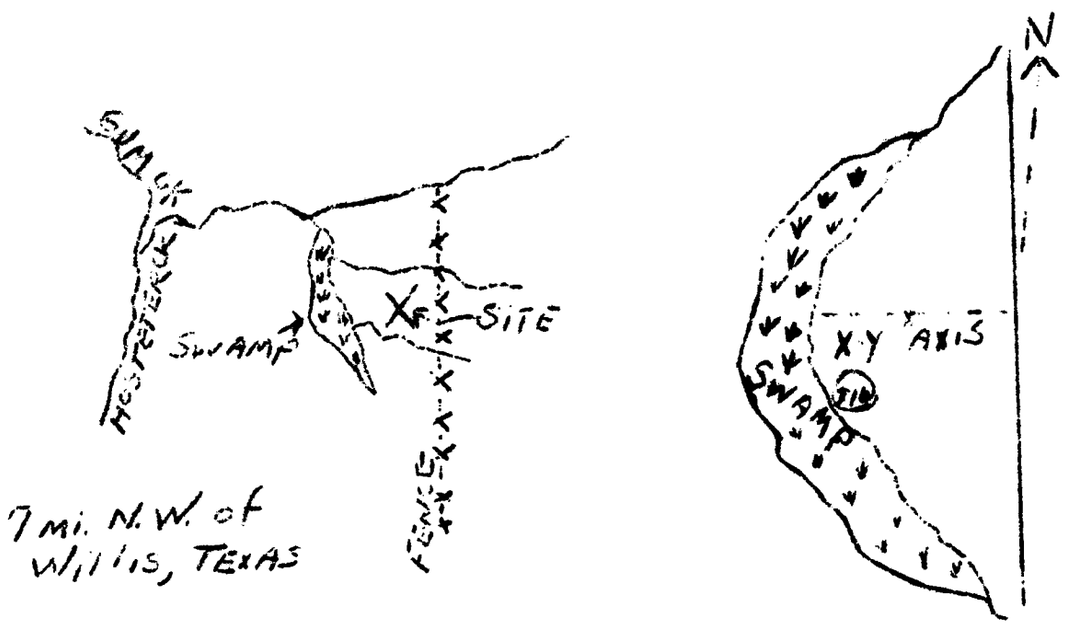
3) The fence went through the crest of the knoll. Therefore our bench mark, set in a girdled water oak tree, in quadrant III, was on the same plane as the ground level under the fence.

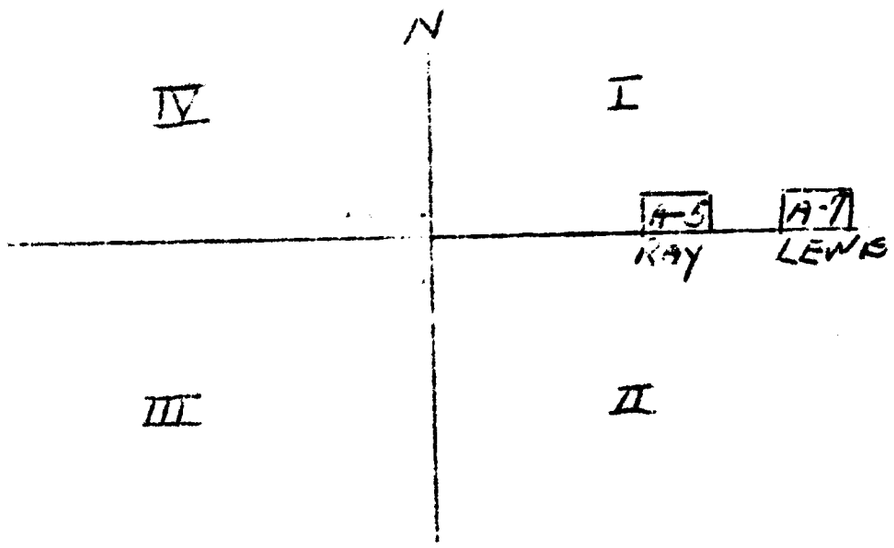
4) A stake was set under the fence and a string line was drawn due west to another stake to establish our east-west axis.

5) Ten yards west of the fence will be the crossing point of of the east-west axis with the north-south axis and this divides the accessable land into four quadrants; I north-

east, II southeast, III southwest and IV northwest. A majority of this working area will be in quadrants III and IV.

6) Both three foot squares that were worked (Ray I-A-5 and Lewis I-A-7) were only three inches below benchmark. Therefore our first levels were from three inches down to twelve inches and all other levels were six inches.





NEW MEMBERS

The following new members were accepted into the Houston Archaeological Society at the monthly meeting on April 14, 1961:

Keller Reese Davis, Jr., 1804 Stuart Avenue, Houston.

Ruth H. Duke, 1706 Oaks Drive, Pasadena.

Roy T. Hopkins, Jr., 6006 Fairdale Lane, Houston.

Raymond L. Vinson, 1209 Trimm, Pasadena.

Russell W. Vinxon, " " " .

Stephen A. Vinson, " " " .

NOW AVAILABLE

"The Archaeologists Note Book", by Clement W. Meighan, University of California, Los Angeles.

Four hundred and twelve pages; five and a half by eight and a half, flexible plastic cover; $4.50.

A concise handbook and manual for the field worker in archaeology. General instruction in good field methods--- field surveying, recording of sites, mapping of sites, techniques for collecting faunal remains and midden material. Basic techniques for cataloguing, photograph, making soil profiles, etc.

Multiple copies of eight different data forms are provided in this book.

Copies are available from the Chandler Publishing Company, 660 Market Street, San Francisco 4, California.