

NEWSLETTER

of the

HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Number 14

July, 1965

OFFICERS 1964 - 65

Chairman - Alan R. Duke
1706 Oaks Drive
Pasadena, Texas

Sec.-Treas.- Miss Elaine Burleigh
3816 Ruskin Street
Houston, Texas

Directors - Mrs. William Caskey
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Final Report on Livingston Survey:

A representative selection of artifacts, maps, site reports, and a history of the HAS participation in the Livingston Survey are now in the hands of Texas Archeological Survey Project personnel in Austin. The information gleaned from these items will be included in a report on the survey of the area.

Discussion on HAS participation in excavations in the area will be held in the near future.

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Annual TAS Dig:

HAS members attending the recent Texas Archeological Society Summer Field School near Beaumont, either full or part time, were as follows: Frank Brezik, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Caskey, Mrs. Anna E. Childers, Mr. and Mrs. Alan R. Duke, Mr. and Mrs. William Fullen, and Mr. and Mrs. R.A. Jircik. More on the TAS Field School at our September meeting.

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Collection Donated:

Stephen T. Watson, formerly of Houston, has donated a large portion of his archeological collection to the HAS. The collection consists largely of pottery, bone and shell artifacts from sites ranging from the Galveston Bay region as far east as Calcasieu Lake, Louisiana.

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Wallisville Reservoir Survey:

The Wallisville Reservoir, a 22,000 acre reservoir to be constructed in connection with a salt water barrier at the mouth of the Trinity River, will be surveyed for archaeological sites by the Texas Archeological Salvage Project sometime late this year.

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Iran Revisited:

Dr. Frank Hole of Rice University, and a member of the HAS, has returned to Iran for a summer of archeological work.

Before leaving, about June 6th, Dr. Hole reported that he would be excavating certain caves and rock shelters for the purpose of finding cultural deposits dating from Mousterian to the Upper Paleolithic. He would like to examine a sequence of tools from those manufactured by Neanderthal man (Mousterian) to those manufactured by modern man (Upper Paleolithic). Dr. Hole expects to return about the middle of September.

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New Members:

We would like to welcome the following new members into the HAS:

Mrs. Rhodes S. Baker, Jr., 3634 Dumbarton, Houston. MO 5-1555
Miss Mary Ellen Young, 2318 Dryden, Houston MO 6-0416
Mr. Arthur G. Randall, 8326 Edgemoor Dr., Houston. PR 4-3206

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Past and Future Monthly Meeting Programs:

April - Cecil Calhoun of Port Lavaca conducted an interesting illustrated tour of Coastal Bend sites. The artifacts he displayed and discussion held after his presentation were especially interesting.

May - Dr. Edward Norbeck of Rice University spoke on a changing Japan and some of that country's internal conflicts as it becomes a modern industrialized society.

June - Shirley Thompson and Elaine Burleigh gave a very well organized illustrated lecture on their recent tour of Central American archaeological sites.

July - The recent TAS Summer Field School at the Gaulding Site near Beaumont was reviewed by members who attended.

August - A highly recommended film, "Highway Salvage Archaeology", will be presented.

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Additions to the HAS Library:

Hole, Frank and Heizer, Robert F., An Introduction To Prehistoric Archaeology. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 306 pp.

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A POSSIBLE CACHE OF FLINT FROM
THE MOUTH OF THE GUADALUPE RIVER
Cecil Calhoun

In the spring of 1960, Gene and Eva Studer of Victoria, together with this writer, began a reconnaissance of the natural levees adjacent to former river channels in the floodplain of the Guadalupe River near its mouth in Calhoun County. The survey thus far has located a number of small campsites along these low sandy ridges, and several more sites buried up to 2 feet beneath silt depositions on the flat plain where they have now been exposed by dredging and other construction activities.

At a location on the east bank of Hog Bayou approximately 3/4 mi. north of State Highway 35, eight large nodules of unworked flint were found eroding from the

bank of the stream. The bayou at this point is nearly thirty feet wide. It is flanked on its eastern shore by a narrow mud flat and a near vertical bank about 2 feet in height. Three of the stones were found at the foot of the low bank and five were still in place immediately above them, just below the scarp. Covering the five undisturbed stones was a 3 to 4 inch layer of dark sandy soil, several broken valves of fresh water mussel and brackish water clam, and one small sherd of Rockport Ware pottery. Above this compacted layer was approximately 6 inches of leaf mold and loose silt. Many large trees, principally willow, water ash, and cypress, together with an abundance of undershrubbery and vines, such as yaupon, wild grape, and greenbrier, cover the site and little could be positively determined about its actual size, but it appears to be quite small and shallow.

All of the stones are flint. They are roughly ovoid in shape and range in length from 10 cm. to 15.5 cm.. Their weight varies from 1.3 lbs. to 2.9 lbs., with an aggregate weight of 16.5 lbs. and an average weight of approximately 2.06 lbs..

A light reddish-brown cortex is present on each stone, and five of them bear traces of a former matrix which was composed of a coarse sand. The sand grains are firmly bonded by iron oxides and fill natural depressions in the uneven surfaces of the cobbles where it has escaped complete dislodgement by the combined battering-abrading action of stream bed rolling which all of the stones have apparently experienced to some extent.

By their weight and general surface appearance, each of the cobbles might readily be assumed to be composed of dense, silaceous stone, but the thick cortices on three of them effectively masks their exact nature. On each one of these three, a small flake has been struck away at one end which removed a small patch of cortex and exposed the fresh, unaltered flint beneath. All of the specimens are predominately brown in color, ranging from light to very dark, and one is a banded brown and grey.

The similarity of the flint nodules suggests that they were all collected from the same locality. From the Hog Bayou site, the nearest source of flint is along the Guadalupe River just south of Victoria, about 25 miles inland. But the nearest location at which flint is found together with small localized deposits of iron is in eastern Goliad County, near the San Antonio River, and about 30 miles distant from the site. Other possible sources where iron ore is sometimes present include the Hochheim-Gonzales area along the Guadalupe River, and near the Lavaca River, southeast of Hallettsville. The majority of the flint found in the two latter areas, however, is not only finer grained but also includes much more colorful material than the examples found on Hog Bayou.

The possibility cannot be overlooked that the eight stones under consideration were not brought to the lower Guadalupe River region by the indigenous people responsible for the small camp site at all, but are of a much more recent origin. This bayou, like several of the other larger ones in the vicinity, has been exploited by occasional sports and commercial fishermen for at least 75 years. Natural stones just this size are ideally suited for use as weights on trot lines, throw lines, gill nets, etc., and are commonly used as such on inland streams and lakes wherever they occur. The bayou is still a well-known fishing spot, particularly along its lower stretches; however, navigation of the bayou in the immediate vicinity of the site is impractical at the present time, and has been so for a number of years, because of the thick, interlaced rafts of Mexican Water Hyacinth which cover the surface of the stream. But the stones could have been lost or discarded along the shore by a com-

paratively recent fisherman, who knowing beforehand that no such convenient stones were to be found along the Texas coast, collected them at some inland locality and transported them to this place. The five stones found near the top of the stream bank in a tangle of roots, leaves, shells, and soil is insufficient to disprove this possibility. And the simple fact that no similar cache has ever been reported from this area even adds credence to this alternate explanation of their occurrence. The "sinkers" could well have been placed in a natural depression or crotovina and later covered over with dirt and debris from the Indian campsite, which already existed at this location, by root action, floodwaters, or the backdirt of burrowing animals.

On the other hand it seems quite safe to assume that the Indians who occupied this area brought or received a great of silaceous stone raw material in the form of unworked cobbles and nodules of gravel. The abundance of waste flakes which bear varying amounts of cortex, as well as occasional singular finds of unaltered flint nodules on coastal campsites, tends to support this assumption. It is hardly surprising them, to find a cache of the same material in the same area. As noted before, stone suitable for chipping into tools and weapons does not appear near the surface in any geological outcropping within 25 miles of the site, hence it was necessary to travel inland to collect it or to obtain it through barter with other groups who carried it to the coast. Because of its usefulness, the scarce material apparently became somewhat of a valued commodity, and frequently even very poor grades of it were utilized. Differentially weathered flaking scars on many chipped stone artifacts from this coastal region indicate that later people gleaned suitably large flakes and discarded tools from sites of earlier cultures and reworked the pieces into somewhat smaller implements satisfactory for their own needs.

And finally, the removal of a small flake from each of three of the stones may well represent frugal efforts to obtain a better look at the true nature of some of the material at the time it was gathered.

The close association of the single sherd of thin, dark brown, sand tempered Rockport Ware suggests that the site and the cache are assignable to riparian hunters and gatherers of the local Rockport Focus, and therefore of late prehistoric or protohistoric age. Observations and surface collections made at several nearby campsites within the river's flood plain indicate that the closely related groups of people who composed this culture were primarily responsible for the preponderance of the small sites which are found atop the natural levees paralleling the meanders of the turbid bayous and lakes near the delta of the Guadalupe River.

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HOUSTON ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Treasurer's Report

June 1, 1964 - May 31, 1965

Balance on hand May 31, 1964	\$ 305.77
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Receipts:

Membership dues for 1964-1965	\$ 286.50
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Total Assets	592.27
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Disbursements:

Texas Archeological Society dues 1964-65	10.00
Oklahoma Anthropological Society dues 1964-65	3.50
Stationery, envelopes, stencils, ink, paper, etc.	39.19
U.S. Postage	60.85
Printing of Newsletters and Library book list	85.33
Film rental and projector	<u>67.34</u>
	\$ 266.21

Balance on hand May 31, 1965	\$ 326.06
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K. Elaine Burleigh
Secretary-Treasurer