

There are at present thirty members in this society, and we hope that this number will eventually be doubled. I anticipate the enrollment of all of these men in the near future as affiliates in the Society for American Archaeology.

To digress for a moment from the subject, let me offer the suggestion that the Society for American Archaeology provide for the organization of local chapters. We have here the nucleus of such a chapter, meeting monthly, organized and ready for absorption by a national group.

Dr. Byers' system of standardized mapping has been adopted with enthusiasm by the Wampanoag Society, over two hundred sites having been already located and assigned designations under that system. As there is estimated to be over 50,000 Indian implements in the collections of this group, the task of reclassifying and redesignating under this system is a tedious one, and will not be completed for some time. When it is available, however, we hope that it will be of value to archaeologists operating in the New England area.

As a further illustration of the value of such an organized group to the profession of archaeology, I should like to offer the following illustration. A few days ago a letter from Dr. Byers requested information on a type of implement called a "chopper." I sent immediately what little data I had, based on sixteen implements in my own collection. Not contented with this, we determined to test the worth of our organization. A description of the particular implement in question was drawn up and mimeographed. Copies were sent to each member of the group with a request for data from their individual collections. Ten days have passed since these requests were mailed; I have received to date data on 1,614 specimens, about eighty per cent of which can be definitely located on sites shown in our map system and thus tied in with associated material. 1,110 specimens have been assembled for study and photographing, which will be done within the next few weeks. The results will be sent to Dr. Byers for his information and the material will be available for his study should he desire it.

We do not believe that the Attleboro group is any exception, but that what has been done here can be duplicated in all areas. Cooperation between amateurs and professionals will produce results.

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#### THE USE OF THE THUMB-SCRAPER

The article, *The Indian Spoon*, by Mr. Irwin W. Cox, in the April issue of this journal is timely since it brings the subject to attention. Mr. Cox offers his reasons for limiting the use of the so-called thumb-scrapers to extracting marrow from bones. As long as primitive man left no written records of the use of tools and implements, it does require much reasoning and logic in trying to solve some of the problems confronting the students of archaeology.

I think Mr. Cox omitted entirely the main and very practical use of the thumb-scrapers, that of abrading the innumerable wooden articles that primi-

tive man made and used, and which have long since disappeared through decay. The great number of bows, arrow shafts, spear shafts, handles for war and ceremonial clubs and all grooved stone implements, plates, bowls, even wooden blades or spoons for extracting marrow, and the many small bone tools such as awls, needles, and fishhooks, could be smoothed with a flint scraper. It is obvious that primitive man used wood for more purposes than any other material, yet we overlook the importance of this because his wooden articles have disappeared, and we emphasize only the preserved material that we find at village sites today. Dr. Strong, in the same issue of *AMERICAN ANTIQUITY*, page 302, mentions the perishable qualities of wood.

All these numberless tools and implements of wood must have been smoothed by primitive man without the use of steel blades, and he soon learned that a flint scraper was a practical tool for the purpose, as the writer and many other students have found by experimenting. The flint scraper was used for smoothing purposes in the same way that our earlier pioneers used a piece of glass. We well remember watching an uncle, more than sixty years ago, smoothing his *homemade* ax handles with glass.

The writer has access to hundreds of these thumb-scrapers for examination and finds that a large percent are worn smooth by much use on the cutting or sharp edge. Many exhibit a resharpened condition.

We agree with Mr. Cox that the flint scraper is the most common tool found on old village sites of the northwest, but this does not take into consideration the tools made of perishable material. Then too, we must realize that the making of flint scrapers was a quick, simple task, which would suggest a very good reason for their abundance, for if one became dulled it was almost as easy to make a new one as to resharpen the old one.

We are willing to admit that the larger flint scrapers may have been used for fleshing hides, as that process was necessary in preparing skins for tanning. We know that bone tools were made and used for this purpose, and it is evident that blades of hardwood must have been used even more commonly.

We cannot see any good reason why primitive man would use a flint scraper as a "spoon" for extracting marrow. We think that the white man today would use a table knife blade rather than a spoon, and a similar blade made of hardwood would have been a more practical tool for the purpose for prehistoric man.

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#### BURIAL METHODS IN MARYLAND AND ADJACENT STATES

In a previous article (this journal, Vol. 2, No. 1), I attempted to find support in local place-names for the statement, made by Dr. William Vans Murray, that the Nanticoke Indians kept the body of a dead king for many years