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# NEWSLETTER

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THE LEONIDAS WESTERVELT ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTION,

ROCK HALL MUSEUM, LAWRENCE, LONG ISLAND, N.Y.

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There are thousands of archaeological specimens which have found their way to museums without any record of their finder or provenience, their cultural value irretrievably lost. Any scrap of data which can be obtained about such specimens is understandably of great value, when one realizes that there are only a finite number of archaeological specimens to be had. While conducting research for a paper on Fort Massapeag in Nassau County in May 1985, an opportunity came to add some information to a fascinating small collection of Long Island artifacts now in the Rock Hall Museum.

It was through the good offices of Father John O'Halloran of Ridgewood, Brooklyn, that the identification of the collection was indirectly made. Father O'Halloran had given the collection to the Museum along with some of his own artifacts on indefinite loan and brought to my attention some artifacts in the lot from the Harbor Green Site at Massapequa. Father O'Halloran told me that these finds were included in a small collection of archaeological specimens he had bought from an east side midtown New York dealer. These specimens numbered 152 items, most of which Father O'Halloran mounted with wire on 8½" by 11" cardboard sheets. In the Rock Hall Museum collection were 12 cards of artifacts and eight large loose specimens. One card of specimens, those from Massapequa, Father O'Halloran retained in his home in Ridgewood. Most of the specimens were labeled by O'Halloran in strong block letters with Indian ink. The information had come from original typed data which gave the provenience of the specimen and the date of the find. Some bore the mysterious initials "L.W." From an examination of the artifacts, and particularly since they came from sites familiar to me, I reached the conclusion that the collection could have been made by only one person, Leonidas Westervelt of Douglaston, Long Island.

I had known Leonidas Westervelt from boyhood days on Long Island in the 1930s in Maspeth. He was a member of the Field Exploration Committee of the New-York Historical Society, which had been formed in 1918 and whose last report was published in 1937. Westervelt, who was a trustee and one of the vice presidents of the Society, had brought together an unsurpassed collection of material relating to Jenny Lind, the Swedish "Nightingale," which was gifted to the Society after his death. He was well acquainted

with the local avocational archaeologists, including William L. Calver and Reginald Pelham Bolton, author of History Written With Pick and Shovel (New York, 1950). Richard J. Koke, Curator Emeritus of the New-York Historical Society, kindly supplied me with the information that Calver and Westervelt knew each other well enough to join forces in the search for archaeological "digs" (personal letter, June 22, 1986). Together they often toured the New York sites in Westervelt's car. To Mr. Koke's knowledge, Westervelt was actively involved with Calver in digs, on Throgs Neck in the Bronx, and at Marble Hill in Manhattan. Mr. Koke said that the Society never received any archaeological antiquities either directly from Westervelt or from his estate. Notices of Westervelt's death appeared in the New-York Historical Society Annual Report for 1952, and in an obituary in the New York Herald Tribune for August 18, 1952. He was an author, playwright (his plays appeared on Broadway) and collector.

Westervelt, as I recall him, was a very cordial, amiable person who bore some resemblance to Charles Laughton. In the field on a wintry day, bundled up to his ears in a shabby overcoat and scuffed shoes, he looked in no way like the educated man I knew him to be. He would wander over the fields, poking stones at his feet with a cane, his immense chauffeur-driven Packard discreetly parked just over the horizon, patiently waiting for its master.

The stray archaeological specimens which he had collected from various sites were considered of no value to a museum and were presumably auctioned off. Records of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, show that Westervelt had deposited archaeological collections with them. Of the 152 items purchased from the dealer by Father O'Halloran, there are 117 specimens which could be called artifacts. Of these, 11 are pieces of ferruginous stone, called "paint" stones, and 22 are of faunal material consisting of 8 broken marine shells, 13 mammal bones identified as deer, and one fish bone. There are three pieces of charcoal. Among the aboriginal artifacts are 19 chipped stone specimens, of which 13 are projectile points, 51 potsherds, 13 white quartz blanks or cores, 8 antler and bone artifacts, 14 rough stone worked specimens and one ground stone artifact (a grooved axe).

From the dates on the specimens, Westervelt began collecting in 1919 (though there is one specimen with the year 1903 [?] on it). He appeared to be most active in the 1920s and 1930s. The last dates were 1948 and 1950. The proveniences are mainly by towns, but some sites are more precisely identified. From Brooklyn, there are specimens from Ryders Pond, Flatlands (Bergen Beach), the Dutch Reformed Church grounds and Canarsie. I later learned that O'Halloran had collected the Dutch Reformed church material (two shells) and the Flatlands material (one shell) personally in 1949 and 1948, and had traded the earlier dated (1903) artifacts (three specimens) from the American Indian Museum. From Queens, there are specimens from Bayside and the Oakland site at Bayside, South Woodhaven (the old Horstman Estate), and Rockaway Neck. Whether or not Westervelt had collected elsewhere in Queens was a question later resolved by Father O'Halloran. From Nassau County, proveniences given are Great Neck, Manhasset and Manhasset Rock Shelter, Roslyn, Glen Cove (Morgan's Beach), Dosoris Pond, Rockville Centre and Massapequa (Harbor Green). From Suffolk County, proveniences represented are Lloyd's Neck, Sag Harbor (North Haven), Shinnecock, Montauk, East Hampton (Spring Banks), East Hampton (Hands Creek), East Hampton (Soak Hides), Northport (Crab Tree), Northport (Crab Meadow), Northport (Callahan) and Sunken Meadow. There are also some stray specimens from Tappan in Rockland County.

Father O'Halloran, who had visited some of the sites which Westervelt had known, began collecting about 1947. Among the artifacts still in his home are about half a dozen additional trays of artifacts from Westervelt's collection. These Westervelt finds include specimens from Maspeth, Douglaston and College Point, answering the question why these areas were not represented.

How did Westervelt get to know about this large number of sites? Undoubtedly he heard about some of them from his museum contacts. I, for one, remember telling him about and even showing him several sites in Queens. He had also visited a number of sites in company with another collector Waldemar J. Pedersen of Floral Park, now deceased. Westervelt evidently knew about the Harbor Green site at Massapequa, which made the newspapers after the finding of Indian burials there in the 1930s. Indeed, it may have been he who caused Mr. William Claude, a local avocational archaeologist, severe anguish. Claude had laid bare some 24 burials at the Harbor Green site for study. Before he could complete his examinations on his next visit to the site, some intruder had heavily disturbed the remains. We believe that the intruder must have been Westervelt. The evidence is the Rock Hall collection. One of Westervelt's photographs is of a burial and there are also some antler bone tools and other specimens provenienced by Westervelt from the burial area. This circumstance forms another part of the Massapequa narrative which I am preparing for Publication (now in print

On the occasion of our visit to the Rock Hall Museum, I made a photographic record of each of the cards of artifacts and the loose artifacts. A count was made of all of the specimens by site. A copy of this record will be deposited with the Rock Hall Museum and the Nassau County Museum at Garvies Point, Glen Cove.

[The above article was edited by James Turex]

TOTAL SPECIMEN COUNT

Potsherds	51	Ground Stone Artifacts	1
Chipped stone artifacts	19	3/4 groved axe	
projectile points	13	Natural coloring stones	11
knives	2	"paint" stones of ferru-	
drills	1	ginous stone	
scrapers	3		
Blanks (white quartz)	13	Faunal Material	22
Antler and bone artifacts	8	shells	8
Bone awls	5	mammal	14
Antler flakers	3	antler deer sections	3
Rough Stone Artifacts	14	deer foot bone	1
rough flaked axe	1	deer teeth	9
"sinew" stones	3	fish	1
hammer stones	4	large jaw bone	
"smoothing" stones	3	Non-artifactual	3
net sinkers	3	charcoal fragments	
		TOTAL SPECIMEN COUNT	152

LIST OF ARTIFACTS IN THE WESTERVELT COLLECTION AS RECORDED BY RALPH SOLECKI FROM NOTES MADE BY FATHER JOHN O'HALLORAN:

CARD 1

3 specimens identified from Great Neck, shellheap, July 29, 1938. 1 "smoothing stone," 2 potsherds with what looks like cord wrapped paddle. Manhasset, Oct. 3, 1934, 9 pieces of cordmarked pottery, 1 broken white quartz arrowhead and 1 broken bone awl. Roslyn, 1 white quartz chipped blank, and 1 cordmarked paddle potsherd. Nov. 8, 1934.

CARD 2

1 oyster shell from Ryder's Pond site. Clam shellbank creek, Brooklyn, Feb. 26, 1949. One Fresh water clam, and one fragment of a quahog. Description of the food economy of the Indians by Father O'Halloran.

CARD 3

2 flat "paintstone" pebbles from Shinnecock "site," collected 1926. One small pestel pebble, 2 fragments of "paintstones" collected from North Haven, Sag Harbor, Oct. 27, 1922. 1 side-notched w. quartz arrowhead and 2 white quartz blanks collected from Sunken Meadow site, April 20, 1937. 3 white quartz blanks from Lloyd's Neck site, Nov., 1933. 1 quartz(?) pebble, waisted as for net sinker. Collected Montauk, Sept. 13, 1919.

CARD 4

5 sherds wired to card with an explanation of Indian pottery by Father O'Halloran. 2 sherds illustrate the coil process of pottery manufacture, and 3 are rim sherds, provenience all not given.

CARDS 5

1 whelk shell, two quahog shells from Prices Farm near Dosoris Pond, Glen Cove, Collected 1911. 1 quartz projectile point, crude, collected Glen Cove, Dec. 31, 1934. Group of 6 specimens from Morgan's Beach, Glen Cove, Oct. 10, 1938. Includes 1 "paint pot," 5 paint stones found on beach.

CARD 6

East Hampton, group of 4 white quartz triangular arrowheads, 1 white quartz "scraper," 2 ferruginous smoothing stones, 1 "deer" tooth, 6 cord-marked potsherds from the Spring Banks Site, East Hampton, June 12, 1926. 3 stones identified as "sinew" stones from the Hand Creek Site, East Hampton, Dec. 1926. 2 stones identified as "polishing" stones from the Soak Hides Site, Nov. 8-13, 1924.

CARD 7

Rockshelters. 1 pebble hammerstone collected from Rock shelter at Manhasset, Nov. 1937. 2 photographs of the rock shelters at Inwood Park, Manhattan.

CARD 8

Northport. Card with 7 potsherds, plain(?) and 4 deer teeth with section of jawbone. Crabtree site, Northport, Feb. 28, 1933. 1 "paint" stone showing traces of "red paint," 4 white quartz blanks and 1 "knife" fgrt., Lantragan Site, Northport, Nov. 4, 1935.

CARD 9

Kings County. 1 whelk column, Bergan Beach, Flatlands, Brooklyn, Sept. 25, 1948. 1 oyster shell and 1 fragment of quahog shell collected from Indian village site, grounds of Flatlands Reformed Dutch Church and Overbaugh Place and Flatbush Ave., July 23, 1949. One hammerstone, from Canarsie, Flatlands, May 18, 1924. One fire flint(?) found near the Schenck Homestead on Mill Island, Flatlands, Jan. 7, 1950. Photograph of a breast ornament of copper, reportedly found in a gravel pit under the Brooklyn Bridge on Front St. in Brooklyn. Specimen in the Museum of American Indian, N.Y.C. Drawings of three specimens found at Canarsie, Brooklyn in 1903. Includes 1 white quartz arrowhead, 1 potsherd with punctate impressions, and 1 red slate projectile point.

CARD 10

Queens. 4 cord-marked potsherds from Bayside "site," Nov. 22, 1934. 4 cord-marked sherds from Old Horstman Estate, South Woodhaven, collected 1927. 1 jasper "knife" collected from the Oakland Lake Site, Bayside, Oct. 29, 1932. 2 photograph views of the Indian burial plot of the Mt. Zion Churchyard, Douglaston, Queens. "The plot is enclosed with a hedge and is marked by a large split boulder, bearing the words 'here Rest the Last of the Matinecoc.' A bronze tablet placed in 1948 bears the same inscription."

CARD 11

Northport. 1 broken white quartz triangular arrowhead, 1 whole white quartz triangular arrowhead, and 1 dark chert triangular arrowhead, and 1 deer antler prong, worked. Crab Meadow site, Northport, Sept. 2, 1934. 1 notched net sinker pebble, 1 hammerstone pebble and 2 white quartz blanks, collected Callahan site, Northport, Sept. 27, 1936. 1 cord-marked rim sherd, Crab Meadow site, Northport, July 18, 1934.

CARD 12

Rockville Centre. Plate with three rows of specimens. Top row originally had 2 arrowheads, 1 potsherd and small arrowhead and a scraper. Only the long stemmed arrowhead of dark materials present. Middle row has 1 white quartz stemmed projectile point, 1 dark chert side notched pp., 1 dark triangular pp., 1 chipped dark stone drill, 1 long side-notched pp., 1 stemmed w. quartz pp., and 1 limonite paint stone. Lower or bottom row had one "smoothing" stone pebble, 1 dark stone scraper, 1 white quartz triangular pp., and 1 "scraper" of dark stone.

PLATE 13

8 loose specimens, including 1 crude side-notched axe, found near Tappan, N.Y., purchased June 1925. 1 small three quarter grooved stone axe, Rockway Neck, undated, bearing No. 357. 1 piece of elongate pebble pestle, found in "Baycrest" garden, March 10, 1939. 1 round dark pebble, worked, found at Oakland Lake, Bayside, Nov. 12, 1932. One double pitted hammerstone, found Canarsie, Brooklyn, undated. Three sections of bone identified as "bone awls" from Soak Hides site, East Hampton, L.I., Nov. 8, to 13, 1924.