

# The Long Point Site

Gordon K. Wright

Reprinted From

PENNSYLVANIA ARCHAEOLOGY BULLETIN

Vol. XX      July-December 1950      Nos. 3-4

# The Long Point Site

Gordon K. Wright

THE LONG POINT SITE is located on the west side of Conesus Lake, about four miles south of Lakeville in the town of Geneseo, Livingston County, New York. The site consists of two sections about three hundred feet apart, near the lake shore, along the southern side of the Point. The first section, hereafter referred to as Refuse I, is at the southern termination of the Point, for just south of here the shore line begins to resume its north-south direction.

The second section, which we shall term Refuse II, is just south of Long Point Park, on the southern side of the small stream which empties into the lake here. Refuse II consisted wholly of refuse material, excavated by the writer in 1941, with no burials. It is with this section that most of this paper will deal.

Refuse I was a mound-shaped accumulation along the lake shore, east of the stone farmhouse. It extended about twenty-five feet along the edge of the five foot high bank bordering the beach, and about fifteen feet inland from the bank's edge, each end tapering off in a semicircle. It was about two feet higher than the level of the surrounding land, but the greatest thickness of the refuse was nearly three feet. The edge of the mound bordering the lake had been washed away, and refuse was found along the bank down to the beach.

This mound was trenched in 1924 by William A. Ritchie and Edmund C. Kelly. The former obtained the following arti-

facts: trumpet pipe bowl, three pipe stem fragments, one bone awl, three worked antler pieces, one cylindrical shell bead, eleven decorated sherds (all incised), sixteen undecorated sherds, one perforated sherd, one chipped sandstone disk, one iron trade axe, one red glass bead, two gun flints, and one silver thimble.<sup>1</sup>

Kelly<sup>2</sup> dug the following: two tubular bone beads, one split antler tool, one black slate disk, sixty-five netsinkers, twenty-five potsherds (undecorated), and a chipped chalcedony implement. Also obtained at that time were many chert chips, two chert cores, firestones, animal bones, two squirrel mandibles, deer mandibles, bear canine tooth, fish and bird bones, and mussel shells.

Further excavations of Refuse I were carried on in 1930 by a group from the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences, the main result being the exposure of a double burial in the refuse. This burial was located on the western edge of the mound, about one foot ten inches below the surface. Each skeleton rested on its left side, head to the south, facing west, legs slightly flexed. With the exception of the mandible and the right clavicle of the male, all the bones of the two skeletons were properly articulated. Missing, however, were the bones of the left leg and foot of the male, broken off just below the knee.

- 
1. From Ritchie's notes. He describes the mound as having larger dimensions than those above.
  2. *Ibid.*

The male individual was further of interest in that one of its vertebrae contained the tip of a projectile point, as did also one humerus and the left superior maxilla, while other points (triangular) were found in the thoracic region.

Beneath the female skeleton were fragments of a bark grave lining. The common grave was surrounded with and covered by many small boulders, and the grave fill contained ash, charcoal fragments, plain pottery sherds, and one pitted hammerstone.<sup>3</sup> The burial was, naturally, intrusive in the mound, and was apparently prehistoric Iroquois, according to the triangular projectile points and to the lack of grave goods. One wonders what the circumstances were surrounding the sudden death of the middle-aged male individual, his body riddled with arrows and his left leg hacked off below the knee. Supposedly the female died at the same time, and both were buried together.

The writer's attention first was called to Refuse I mound in 1940 by Mr. Harold Kershaw, whose trailer stood on the edge of it. He dug out a comb, some awls, and some pottery, and then contributed his time in assisting the writer in excavating Refuse II as well.<sup>4</sup>

The soil in the mound was mainly black, starting directly under the sod, and extending laterally to the mound's perimeter. Throughout were patches—some of them thick—of gray, light ash, but no actual firepits were observed, nor were stratified layers present. In fact, there was much mixture of soil and ash, as one would expect, after the previous digging on the site. Many fire-burned stones, especially

granite boulders, were present throughout, as well as occasional pieces of charcoal.

The artifacts recovered are of a type similar to those found in Refuse II, and are described in some detail on the following pages.

Refuse II was excavated completely by the writer in the summer and fall of 1941.<sup>5</sup> Here again, there had been previous digging,<sup>6</sup> and it was reported that at one time some of the mound had been levelled by using its dirt for nearby fill. This could account for the depression in the center. This refuse area extended east to west about fifty-three feet, and north to south about thirty-seven feet. Its eastern edge at the time of Indian occupancy bordered the lake, for here the hardpan underneath the refuse ended horizontally, and dropped down for as much as eighteen inches, where were found small, water-worn pebbles of the former beach, mixed with ash and sand. Here were found sherds of the older pottery, including the roughly finished type illustrated in Figure 10, Plate III.

Refuse II was composed of black soil, gray loam, and pure ash. Layer stratification was not found, but solid patches of ash were uncovered, evidently fire pits, although shallow ones. One of them contained a single pottery vessel, one sherd of which is seen in Figure 26, Plate V. Another pit or ash deposit surrounded a cluster of small, fire-burned boulders.

The refuse above the hardpan at its thickest points measured about twenty-six inches in depth. Near the bottom were the older types of sherds (Point Peninsula),<sup>7</sup> above which were the Owasco<sup>8</sup> and

3. From field notes in the files of the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences, Rochester, New York.

4. Permission to excavate both sections was granted by Mr. George Hill, who was operating the Wadsworth farm lands at Long Point.

5. Dr. Clayton Mau of the Genesee State Teachers College furnished the writer with general pictures of the site, plus aid in digging.

6. Mr. Charles F. Wray had dug one trench here, and his recovered artifacts are included in this analysis.

7. See pottery description below.

8. *Ibid.*

the Iroquois sherds. Near the mound perimeter, the depth of the artifacts was of little significance, for some of the Owasco material, such as the pipe bowl shown in Figure 1, Plate II, occurred just under the sod.

Each general class of artifact will be described on succeeding pages.

### *Stone Artifacts*

Some of the projectile points recovered from the site are illustrated on Plate I. Only one corner-notched point and only a few side-notched points were found, but the site did produce a number of Archaic, narrow and broad, stemmed points. Most of the triangular ones were found in the upper sections of the refuse, and most of them can be classed as of the Owasco culture. Curiously enough, no examples of the late prehistoric or early historic type of Iroquois point—the small, equilateral, straight based form—were to be seen in either Refuse I or II, which form is prevalent, for instance, on the Dutch Hollow (Livingston County) site of early contact vintage. Argillite points came from both Refuse I and II, near the bottom. Most of the flint points are of Onondaga chert.<sup>9</sup>

With the exception of the maskette of sandstone (Figure 14, Plate I), and the bannerstone fragment (Figure 18, Plate I), the stone artifacts tended to be of crude execution. Anvilstones, hammerstones, and pitted stones were abundant, and there were several chipped sandstone and shale disks, some of them notched for use as net-sinkers (Figure 12, Plate I). There were several small, naturally flat sandstone disks which may or may not have been used in games.

The netsinkers, totalling over twenty-nine hundred, deserve some notice. Such a total indicates the use of the site as a fishing camp, and either shallow water in the cove or deep water off the Point was available to the inhabitants. The net-sinkers vary in weight from three ounces to four and one-quarter pounds. Most of them are sandstone boulders and pebbles; a few are of black or gray shale; and two are of fossiliferous limestone. Some of the shale and sandstone ones are disks, as mentioned above, with a notch on two opposite sides, and two of these are perforated in the center. Four of the sandstone ones possess ground notches. Besides the disk combinations there were others of anvil and sinker, or of anvil, sinker, and hammerstone. The flat beach stones were not used exclusively, for great effort was expended in notching thick, round and heavy stones.

### *Bone and Antler Artifacts*

The majority of the mammal bone artifacts were fashioned from deer bone,<sup>10</sup> and much use was made of deer and elk antler, while wild turkey bone was the source of supply for many awls, and perhaps for beads, as seen on Plate II. One of the unusual objects is seen in Figure 7, Plate II, which may have been used either as a pin or as a hair ornament. It is pointed and its "ears" are notched. Other ornaments are the cut and perforated deer phalangeal bones (Figure 12). Figure 25 shows an antler section split and perforated probably for the insertion of some incisor such as that of the beaver, for use as a cutting tool.

These artifacts occurred at all depths, as did the unworked mammal and bird

9. A recommended reference on the flint of the state is Charles F. Wray's "Varieties and Sources of Flint Found in New York State," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 1-2, pp. 25-45.

10. The writer is indebted to Mr. William Kruse of Ward's Natural Science Establishment, Rochester, New York, for his identification of the mammal and bird bones.

bone, whose volume was equal to that of two bushel baskets. Bones of many types of birds and animals were present, and included, for instance, those of the swan and hog. Only a few fish bones were seen, and there was a small number of fresh water (mussel) clam (*Unio*) shells.

#### *Trade or Contact Material*

Some trade artifacts from Europe found their way to Long Point, including fragments of a glass bottle, of a brass kettle, of white clay pipes, an iron axe, glass beads, gun flints, and a thimble. These were either just under the sod or very near the surface, and they could have been dropped here either before or after white men actually came into western New York.

#### *Pottery Pipes*

No complete pipes were recovered, and only one (Figure 2, Plate II), could be restored almost wholly from its original fragments. The total number of pipe fragments—all of clay—is fifty, and this includes two white clay (kaolinite) stems of European origin. As far as can be determined, there are definitely twelve obtuse angle specimens, and in addition, it may be taken for granted that twelve other trumpet bowls represent pipes of that angle. There is only one right angle pipe fragment.

Of the twenty-three bowl specimens, fourteen are of trumpet shape, one semi-globular, three collared, and two straight sided. One of the trumpet bowls features a human face effigy. The bowl shape inside is round in seven instances, square in one case, and oval in four cases. The trumpet form was characteristic of Iroquois culture.

The stem shape is as follows: twenty-one round; one flat on one side; one flat on two sides; and one oval. The oval shape of

the latter is due to the position of some missing extension off the side of the main portion of the stem. All the stems tapered in cross section from bowl to mouth end, the average diameter measurement of which is three-eighths inch.

The technique of decoration and the design on two bowls are Owascoïd. One of them, that shown as Figure 1, Plate II, is slightly globular with vertical rows of finely corded stick impressions, apparently applied in rocker fashion. Its stem is oval, and without doubt should be classified as an Owasco pipe. The other bowl exhibiting Owascoïd technique and design, shown as Figure 3, Plate II, has also finely corded, impressed lines, but they are horizontal. Underneath these rows are large bosses, upon and around which are rows of punctations. On the inner edge of the lip is a channel containing a row of sharper punctations. The trumpet shape of the bowl however, classes it as Iroquoian.

The square trumpet pipe bowl (Figure 5, Plate II), whose inner form is oval, is decorated simply with a series of three incised lines below and parallel to the lip.

Three of the trumpet bowl fragments each have a slight collar, which is decorated with a row of vertical, small, corded stick impressions, in two cases, across which is here and there a short, incised line. The other specimen contains two continuous incised lines, parallel to the lip, underneath which is a row of small punctations done with a sharply pointed tool.

Of the three bowl pieces having a large collar, the smallest has two rows of simple punctations along the face of the collar, which extends five-eighths inch out from the bowl, and a row of them on the under edge of the collar, at the base of which is a row of crude, vertical punctations. Another of the collared bowls (Figure 9, Plate.

II), is decorated with a horizontal row of vertical punctations near the rim, and underneath this are two large punctations with three vertical rows of smaller ones between them. The third large collared bowl is crudely decorated with six horizontal, incised lines, above which is a row of tiny stamped impressions (Figure 4, Plate II).

The composition of the paste has not been determined completely, but it is tempered with quartz, hornblende, and mica particles, among others, which range in size from very fine to coarse. The finely tempered clay reveals a hardness of 3.5 and 4, and the seventeen fragments of this hardness are polished. The color on the surface ranges from black, gray, and brownish yellow to orange shades.

#### *Potsherds*

The potsherds are of a considerable variety. No whole vessels were found, but without too much effort, from one-third to one-half of some vessels were restored with original pieces only. There are two thousand and six hundred sixty-seven smooth body sherds, one cord-marked rim, and two hundred and five cord-marked body sherds, speaking of the haphazard, over-all cord impressions.<sup>11</sup> Check stamp paddle impressions are to be seen on fifty body sherds, on fifteen neck sherds, and on nine rims. In addition, there are ninety-three body and neck sherds of an intermediate nature, whose analysis proved difficult.

The paste is tempered with grit in all but four sherds, which are shell-tempered. The grit ranges from medium fine to coarse, and apparently came mostly from burned and pulverized granite boulders. The tempering is very coarse in some of the earlier

wares, while the Iroquoian sherds tend to be finer tempered. The hardness ranges from 2 to 3.5. Only a few instances of the coiling method of manufacture are to be noticed. Most of the sherds have a laminated structure from the paddle-and-anvil method. There is a variety of surface colors or shades, including yellows, grays, orange, and reddish brown.

#### *Paddle-marked*

The pottery indicates a succession of cultural occupations on the site, from fairly early times to late prehistoric times. For instance, sherds of the type illustrated in Figure 10, Plate VI, are from a straight sided vessel, are grooved vertically, both on interior and exterior surfaces, apparently from a cord-wrapped paddle, and are coarse tempered. The two rims and two necks of this nature could be typed as *Vinette I*.<sup>12</sup> They came from the eastern edge of Refuse II, near the hardpan at the bottom of the refuse.

Figure 10, Plate VI, shows decoration by some kind of a ridged or grooved paddle, applied in both oblique directions on the exterior, and vertically on the interior, with some smoothing-over. It is coarsely tempered. This style occurred near the bottom of the refuse.

A few body sherds of another kind of paddle impression, the check-stamp, also were found, and were probably not Iroquoian. Various corded treatments, whether by paddle or otherwise, will be described below.

#### *Dentate Stamped*

Dentate stamp decoration is well represented. Some of it, like that in Figure 11, Plate III, answers the description of *Vinette*

11. Mr. Alfred K. Guthe, Junior Anthropological Curator, Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences, assisted the writer in the pottery analysis.

12. Ritchie, William A., and Richard S. MacNeish, "The Pre-Iroquoian Pottery of New York State," *American Antiquity*, Vol. 15, No. 2, (October, 1949), p. 100.

Dentate,<sup>13</sup> in part, for the lip is flat and the rim outflaring, with oblique rows of dentate stamp impressions. Another kind differs in bearing an alternate oblique row of incised lines. Figure 5, same Plate, is an example of the sherds which have horizontal rows of dentate stamping above the short oblique ones. Others have oblique rows above and below horizontal ones, or horizontal ones in addition to notches on the lip's outer edge. The vertical location of these sherds ranged from middle to bottom.

#### *Punctate*

There is a variety of punctate decoration, some being illustrated on Plate III (Figures 9 and 12). Most of it is of a linear type. On one, the oblique marking at the top of the rim was effected by a corded stick, and below this are horizontal corded punctate impressions. Similarly marked pottery has transverse punctations on the flat lip, and the horizontal punctations may have been done with the fingernail. In some cases the punctations were made on a cord-roughened surface, while the lip's inner edge bears notches, or there are punctations on the inner surface. One sherd has a complex dentate treatment, and is to be classified in the Point Peninsula series,<sup>14</sup> generally speaking. Most of the punctated sherds were found in the middle and lower depths.

#### *Cord-Imprinted*

Some of the cord impressions were accomplished by means of a cord-wrapped paddle-edge, as shown in Figures 4, 6, and 8, Plate III, while Figures 3 and 7 illustrate the use either of such a paddle edge or a corded stick. Figure 3 reveals a corded stick impression on a corded surface, and some sherds have such impressions on the

lip. Figure 6, being channeled, could be classed as Owasco Corded Collar.<sup>15</sup> Figures 2 and 3, Plate IV, show heavy, deep corded impressions on a rough, corded surface, not only on the sides but on the lip also. The impressions at the top of the rim, whether oblique or vertical, occur above horizontal rows of linear impressions.

Other sherds of this type differ in that the ridges between the horizontal rows have been partially smoothed over. One neck sherd has corded stick impressions in a herringbone design. All of these sherds, as far as can be determined, have thickened rim at the lip, and outflaring rim. They belong in the Owasco series,<sup>16</sup> being cord-on-cord. All were found at about a fifteen inch depth in Refuse II, in the western half.

#### *Linear Imprinted*

This decoration is distinguished at Long Point by linear impressions plus punctations, illustrated in Figure 13, Plate III. This has a flat, slightly pointed lip and an outflaring rim. Similar sherds have "interrupted linear" lines, sometimes called the "push-and-pull" method of decoration. Below these occur the short punctations.

#### *Notched*

This type was set apart inasmuch as notches are the only means of decoration on some sherds. One sherd has a pinched lip, rounded and notched, with a row of notches at the top of the rim at the lip's outer edge. Figures 10 and 11, Plate IV, portray the large notch variety. Figure 11 has the notches at the lower edge of a thick collar and is channeled. On some sherds the wide, flat lip is extended as a narrow collar, deeply notched. On others the notches are long and oblique, or large nodes are developed on the collar. One

13. Ibid.

14. Ritchie and MacNeish, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

15. Ibid., p. 113, Figure d.

16. Ibid., p. 107.

sherd has a lip which is outwardly down sloping and sharply angled at its inner edge.

The large notch type is a late prehistoric and historic Seneca trait, and most of the sherds bearing this feature were located in the top half of both Refuse I and II.

#### *Incised*

Some of the crudest of the incised sherds are exemplified in Figure 1, Plate IV, with the broad, bold, vertical and horizontal lines. The lip is flat, the rim outflaring, and four rims have a vertical protuberance from lip to neck. A different style of incising is seen in Figure 4, where the tool was sharp and the slanting lines occur on lip and rim interior as well as exterior. On some sherds the lines are crude, running horizontally with alternate oblique ones. Figure 5 is somewhat similar to this, but the lines are more bold and there is a collar.

Figure 8 shows a common form, on which a series of parallel lines are oblique to the lip and at right angles to an adjacent series, and on which there is a high collar, and pointed lip, in similar examples. This type is channeled, and there are variations of that theme of incising. Figure 9 has a flat lip and a short, slanting collar on which are oblique and vertical incised lines, while the neck is wholly plain.

The incised sherds tended to occur nearer the top of both Refuse I and II, and represent an Iroquoian trait. On some there is an early kind of incising, in which only half of the familiar triangle is present, and there is no collar. Figure 6, Plate IV, is similarly incised, but notched, and others do possess a collar. Figure 5 illustrates the combined result, having a more definite, incised and notched collar. A high collar and the triangle motif are seen in

Figure 12, whose base becomes notched in Figure 8.

#### *Incised and Punctate*

Some of the incised sherds contain punctations as well, as seen in Figure 12, Plate IV, where the triangle formed by the opposed lines is filled with punctations. One type has one incised, horizontal line above rows of punctations, while another has opposed, oblique and incised lines below two rows of vertical punctations.

#### *Incised and Notched*

Some of the notches in this classification could be termed punctations, but are not included in the preceding paragraph. One sherd so notched has a flat lip, notched on the outer edge, and some faint, incised and oblique lines on the rim. Figure 6, Plate IV, has an outflaring rim, flat lip, and a row of notches above and below the horizontal lines, with oblique lines at intervals. This carries over into Figure 5, which is collared, and into a similar kind, also collared, but without a notch at the top of the rim. In Figure 5 the top notching is on the lip, while that on the collar's lower edge is larger, and on a slant. The notches are also fewer in number.

On one type the notching occurs above the incised lines, while on another it is on the lip's outer edge. In Figure 8 the notching is below the incised lines, at the base of the collar. In some of these examples the opposed series of incised lines form triangles, and some of the lips are pointed, while most of the rims are channeled. It will be noticed that the incised lines appear also on the short, thickened and notched collar in Figure 10.

This type of decoration is a prehistoric Iroquois trait, as indicated above, with Figure 6 being the earlier form, Figure 5



the intermediate form, and Figures 10 and 11 the late prehistoric variety, some of the latter being found even on the early contact sites. This means that the earlier forms had no collar, while the later ones did.

#### *Plain*

Some plain sherds will be described briefly. One has a round lip whose edge is rolled outward and which is faintly notched, but the rim surface is plain. Others are somewhat like this, but the lip is impressed diagonally with a corded stick. Another has an outwardly down sloping lip. Most of these plain rims could be classed as an Owasco type known as Canandaigua Plain.<sup>17</sup> Another plain kind of sherd has a short, slanting collar like that in Figure 11, Plate IV, minus the notches.

#### *Conclusions*

It is apparent that the Long Point site was inhabited by peoples of most of the known cultural groups of the state, including the Archaic, the Woodland (Point Peninsula and Owasco), and the Iroquois, both prehistoric and historic. The occupation here at any one time was probably small, and the site may have been nothing more than a seasonal fishing camp.

Sites which are wholly Archaic exist on each side of Conesus Lake, so that it is reasonable to assume that Archaic peoples made use of the Long Point area as well, especially since their type of projectile point was left there. Undoubtedly they were responsible for many of the netsinkers, for the Lamoka Lake site (Schuyler County), a typical Archaic site, produced hundreds of them.

Following the Archaic culture came the two divisions of the Woodland culture, namely, the Point Peninsula and the Owasco.

At Long Point the Point Peninsula culture is represented in the presence of potsherds typed as Vinette I, Vinette Dentate, and some of the punctate types. The Owasco culture is represented in the cord-on-cord sherds, the corded collar sherds, some of the dentate types, and perhaps certain of the plain sherds, as well as the larger triangular projectile points and the two pipe bowls previously described.

The Iroquois culture is exhibited on the site by both Seneca and Cayuga handiwork, both of prehistoric and historic times. To date no very close connection has been shown between Late Woodland (Owasco) and the known Seneca and Cayuga cultures. This lack of close relationship supports the theory of the relatively late entrance in Late Woodland times of the Seneca Nation from the west, into the southwestern part of the state, from where that tribe moved northward in the Genesee Valley.<sup>18</sup>

Be that as it may, both Iroquois and Owasco cultures are recognized at Long Point. The incised sherds, the notched sherds, and the combinations of these, as well as other types, probably, are clearly those of the Cayugas and Seneca people.

The Long Point site, then, besides having its succession of cultures, had a place in the prehistoric development of the Seneca Nation, and even had some connection with the Cayuga story. On top of this, the site was occupied at the time trade with white men began, in the sixteenth century.

17. Ritchie and MacNeish, *op. cit.*, p. 110. *Transactions*, Vol. 6, Nos. 1-4, pp. 18-19.

18. See Frederick Houghton's "The Archeology of the Genesee Country," *New York State Archaeological Association, Researches and Transactions*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1922), pp. 46-47; also his "The Migrations of the Seneca Nation," *American Anthropologist*, n. s. Vol. 29 (1927), pp. 241-250.

See Arthur C. Parker's "An Analytical History of the Seneca Indians," *New York State Archaeological Association, Researches and Transactions*.

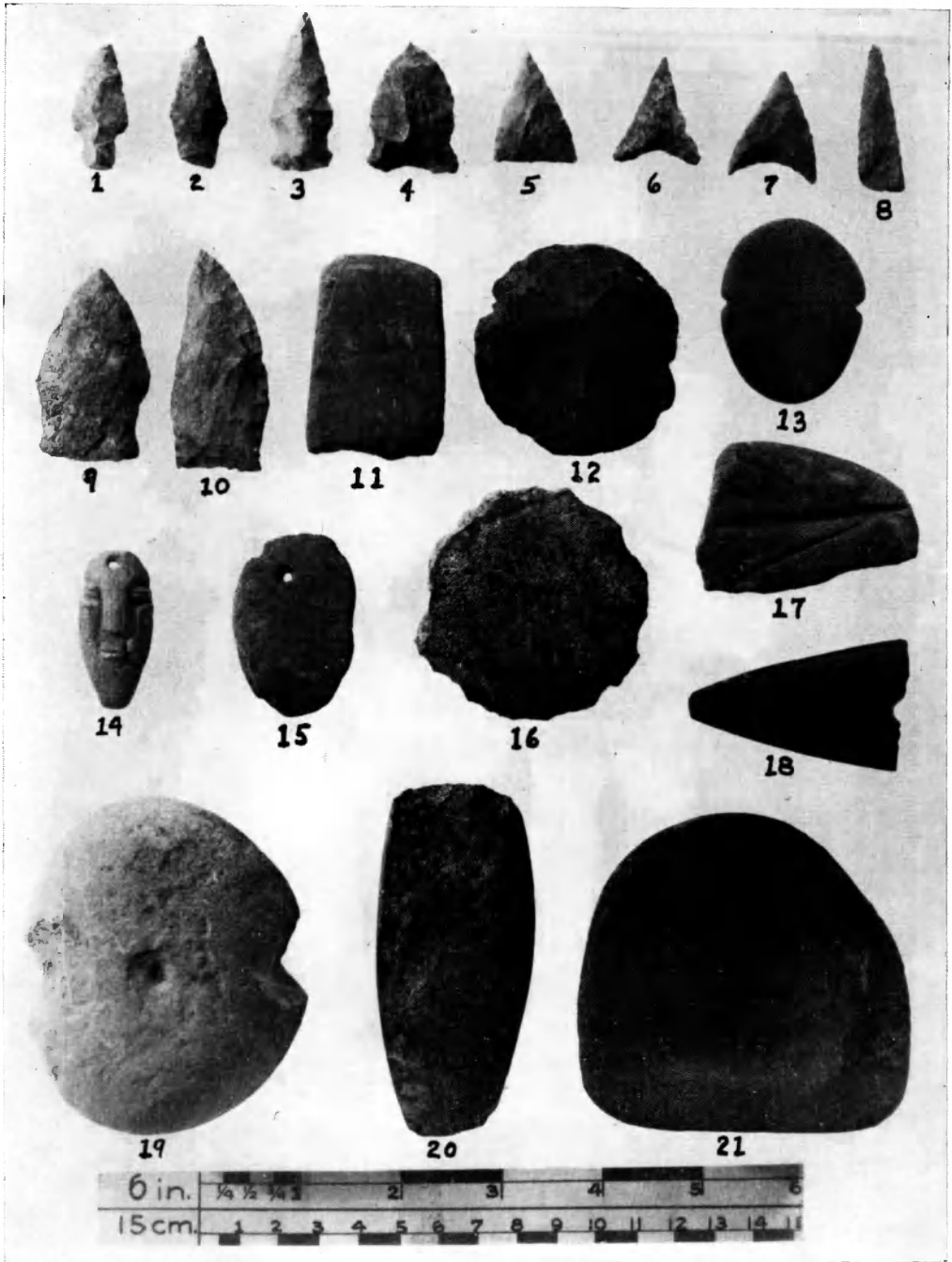


PLATE I. THE LONG POINT SITE

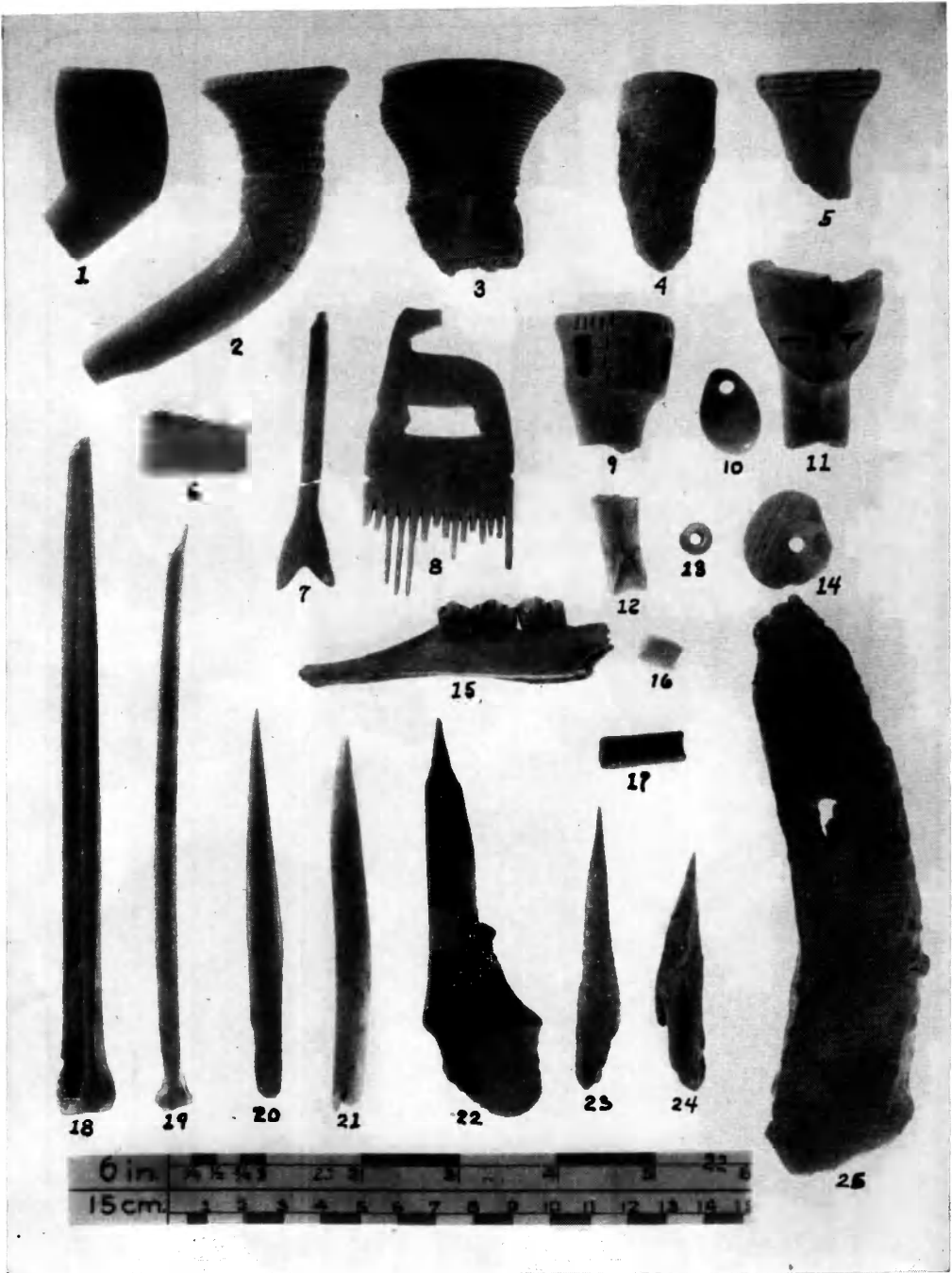


PLATE II. THE LONG POINT SITE

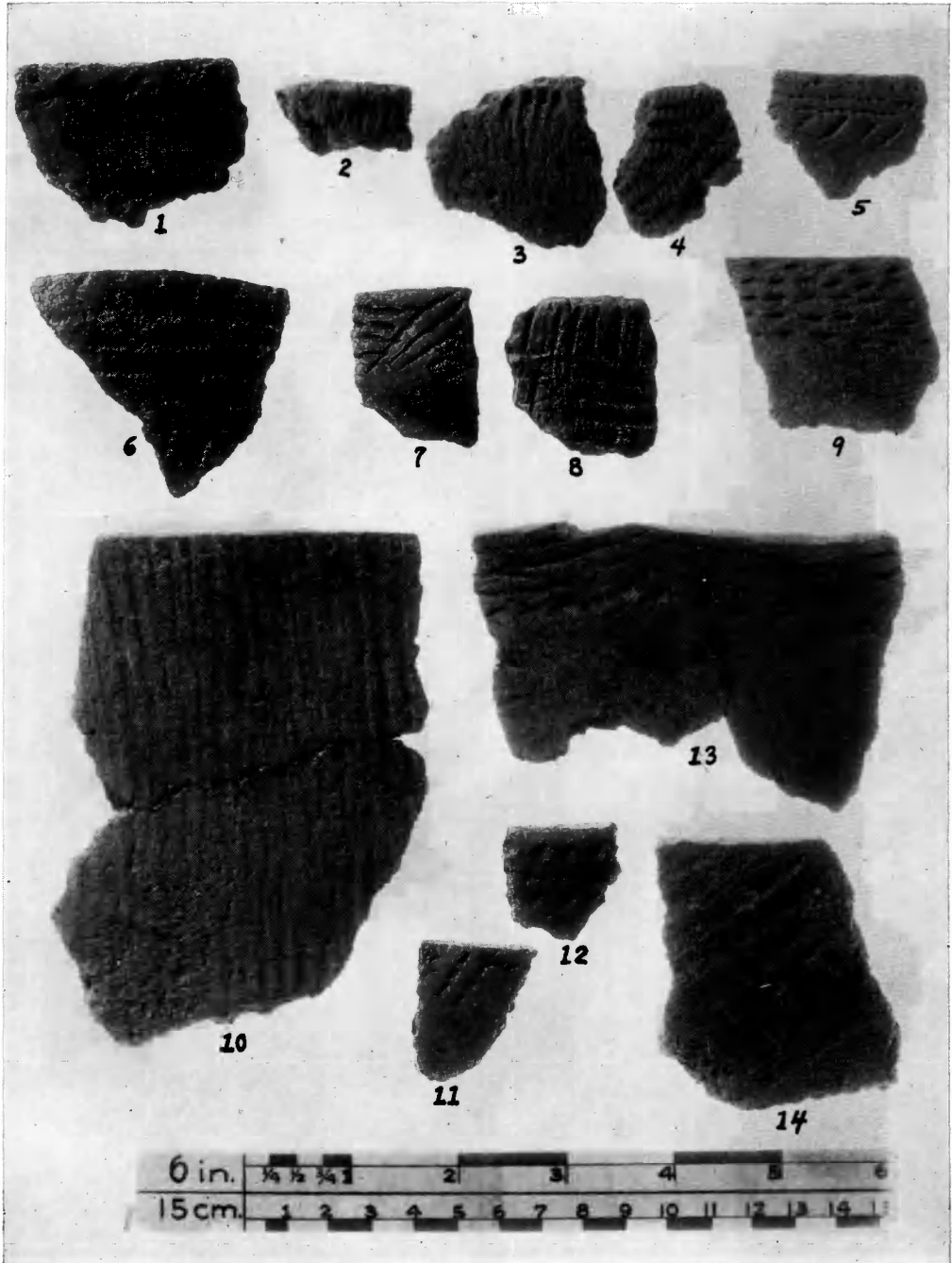


PLATE III. THE LONG POINT SITE

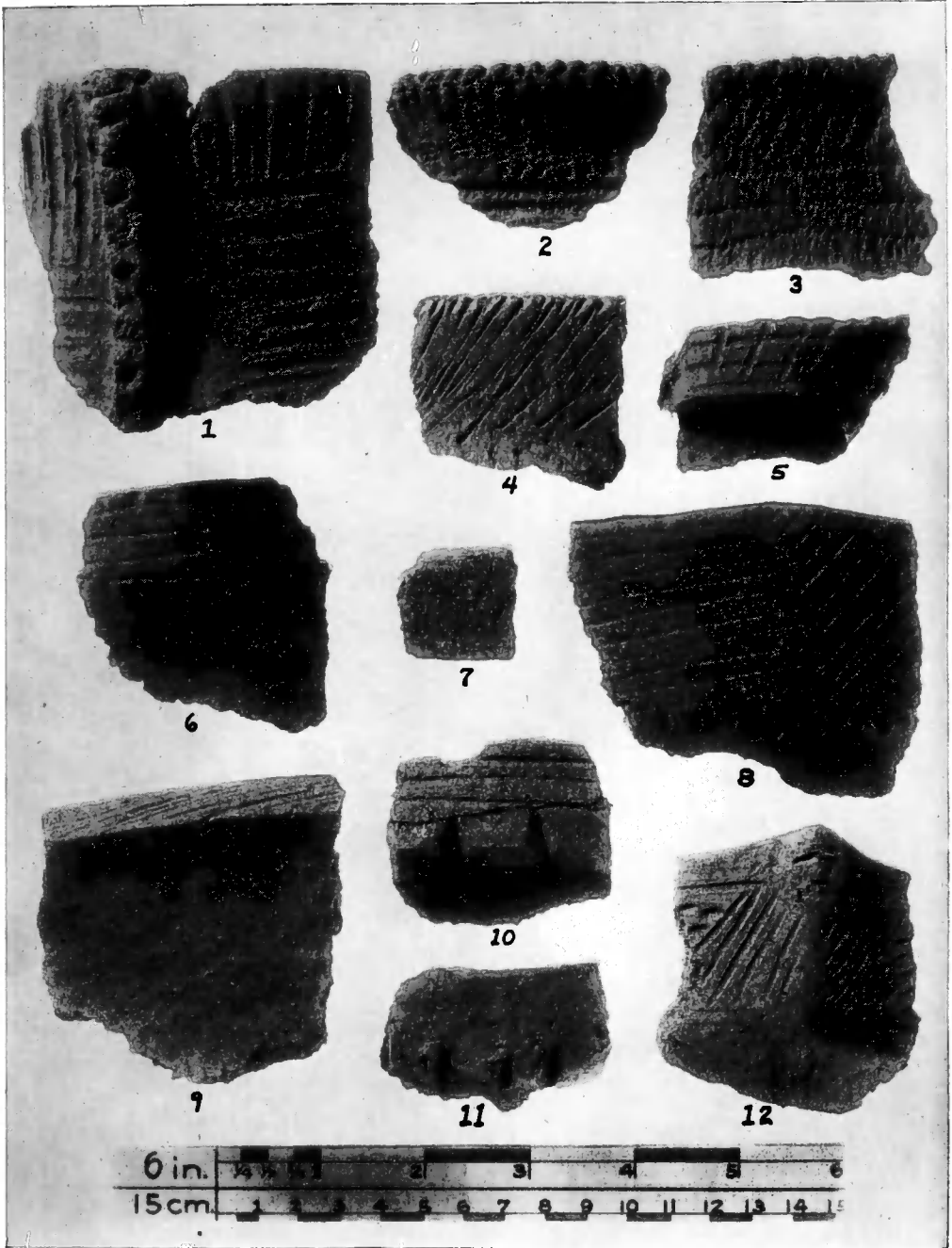


PLATE IV. THE LONG POINT SITE