

Alabama Archaeological Society

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Number 8

SUMMER ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT - PHASE II

Phase II of the Society's Summer Archaeological Project will be conducted on Saturday and Sunday, August 14 and 15, 1982, according to Charles Moore, Chairman of the Resources Committee. Phase II work will consist of excavations at the same location where the detailed surface collection was conducted in June, at the intersection of Fennell Lane and Sixth Street near Leighton, Alabama.

Archaeologists from the University of Alabama - Office of Archaeological Research - will arrive at the site during the morning of August 14 and start trenching operations with mechanical equipment to locate areas for manual excavation and screening operations. It is expected that suitable areas will have been located by noon, and participants in the project should plan to be at the site by 1 p.m. to begin activities. Workers will perform excavations, screening, sorting, cataloging, and a multitude of other details associated with field procedures. Individuals should bring gloves, water, hat, insect repellent and dress for hot weather. A small hand trowel is the only tool individuals need bring, if one is available from home. All other equipment and supplies will be provided by the University of Alabama and the Society.

Work will be terminated late in the afternoon and resume at 8 a.m. Sunday morning, and conclude by early afternoon Sunday. Tent, trailer, and motor home camping is permissible at the site for those who may desire to stay on the site. Participants and visitors are cautioned that restroom facilities are not available at the site.

Saturday night the action will shift to the Executive Inn (Best Western), located on Court Street (Highways 72 and 43) in downtown Florence. A meeting room has been scheduled for dinner (to be ordered from the menu - no reservation required), and there will be an after-dinner speaker. Room accommodations are available in the Executive Inn (205/766-2311) at \$29 single and \$34 double, with restaurant and pool available.

The Quad Cities Inn, located approximately across the street from the Executive, has rooms at \$22 single and \$29 double. No restaurant or pool.

August 1982

Note: The registration fee for participating in this summer activity (for those who did not register for both Phases I and II) is \$10, and those who have not previously registered may do so at the site. Payment by check is preferred and should be made payable to the Alabama Archaeological Society. Approximately 25 people registered for Phase II while registering for Phase I.

A tentative report on the analysis of the surface collection should be available by Saturday, August 14, 1982, and will be presented at the dinner meeting.

The Editors

LIST OF REGISTRANTS

1982 SUMMER ACTIVITY - JUNE 5 AND AUGUST 14-15, 1982

Burn, Alice	Birmingham
Clement, James A.	Russelville
Craig, James E.	Tuscumbia
Edwards, O. W.	Florence
Fain, Ann S.	Huntsville
Gay, Marjorie	Standing Rock
Gay, Robert	Standing Rock
Hartley, O. D.	Huntsville
Haworth, Shirley L.	Jamestown, North Carolina
Haworth, William B.	Jamestown, North Carolina
Henson, B. Bart	Huntsville
Henson, Bettye T.	Huntsville
Huscher, Harold A.	Standing Rock
Johnson, David B.	Toney
Lee, Jim	Huntsville
Lee, Ola Ann	Huntsville
Luke, Dorothy P.	Huntsville
Moore, Charles	Florence
Moore, Mary-Eliza	Florence
Plum, Barbara G.	Sheffield
Plum, William E.	Sheffield
Rohr, Nancy	Huntsville
Stair, Nancy	Florence
Sweat, Ronald	Childersburg
Sweat, Sandra	Childersburg
Terry, James	Town Creek
Warren, Larry	Huntsville
Whitt, Blanca	Huntsville
Whitt, Ellis	Huntsville
Williams, John L.	Lacey's Spring
Wilmer, Karen	Huntsville
Wright, Amos	Huntsville
Yanda, Mildred P.	Muscle Shoals

CHAPTER NEWS

Cullman Chapter

The June meeting was held on the 21st at the Cullman County Courthouse. The point of the month was the Dalton.

Huntsville Chapter

The speaker for the July chapter meeting was professional archaeologist Charles Hubbert. Charles made an interesting and thought-provoking presentation on possible explanations for petroglyph sites in the southeast. Jim Lee led the discussion on the point of the month, which was the Adena.

Huntsville Chapter members toured the Oscar Wells Museum of Art in Birmingham on June 26. The American Indian, pre-Columbian Latin American, and Far Eastern exhibits are most impressive, as are the other collections on display. Plans are being made for a return visit.

Several members of the Huntsville Chapter attended the "Seminar on Indian Culture" at the Wheeler Wildlife Refuge Interpretive Center near Decatur on June 27. The program began with a film - tracing the history of the Indians from pre-history, through "contact" with Europeans, manifest destiny and the Trail of Tears, resettlement, treaties made and broken, up to achievements and problems of Indians in today's complex world. Dr. Lindy Martin - Dean of Student Services at Samford University, Birmingham; and Chief of Cherokees, Jackson County - was to have been the main speaker, but he was unable to appear. Decatur's John Gustafson stepped in on very short notice and gave an interesting program on Indian migration patterns. John also brought artifacts from his collection for a discussion period which followed the presentation. Visitors to the center toured the small but interesting natural history museum and remained to see another film - this one on endangered species in the animal world.

The Huntsville Chapter meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Arts Council Conference Room, Von Braun Civic Center. For more information call Larry Warren, Program Chairman, at 536-4533.

WHO SCALPED BODO, AND WHY?

Foul doings in prehistoric Ethiopia. Bodo man, a late Homo erectus and one of the closest known relatives of Homo sapiens, was scalped following his death 300,000 years ago, according to new evidence introduced this week by Berkeley anthropologist Timothy D. White. White has completed an electron microscope investigation of the case, and he is convinced that the jagged cuts he has found on the skull fossil of Bodo provide solid evidence of the earliest known scalping, apparently executed with a primitive stone knife. The weapon has not been found.

Who would scalp Bodo, and why? The motive is less clear than the facts, White concedes. Despite the fact that Bodo belonged to a nearly human species of hominids, he says, very little is known about his behavior - whether he lived with a tribe, for example, or coveted territory. Scalping could have been a mortuary practice or form of ancestor worship, he says, but it is impossible to go beyond speculation without further evidence. However, he adds, butchery is unlikely. "It is very difficult to think of an economic reason for this kind of practice".

(From Science News, June 12, 1983)

The Editors

EVIDENCE OF EARLY HOMINIDS

For students of human evolution, the so-called Pliocene gap is the ultimate challenge and ultimate frustration. It is a period spanning from 4 million to 10 million years ago for which there is no meaningful evidence of man's evolutionary history; and it is the period, most now agree, during which the transition from ape to walking hominid, or "ape-man", must have taken place.

Now, for the first time, scientists have uncovered fossil evidence of human ancestry from the impenetrable Pliocene - evidence consistent with the controversial theory that early ape-men walked upright long before the evolution of the large human brain. Perhaps more important, scientists say, they have uncovered in the Awash River valley of Ethiopia what is perhaps the richest fossil record of the mysterious Pliocene gap ever available - a site that promises future data on the emergence of the first hominids.

Kent State University anthropologist Owen C. Lovejoy, one of the world's experts on leg bones, agrees. Although only two bone fragments are available from this earlier period, he says, they couldn't have been two better bones for diagnostic purposes. The femur, he says, leaves no doubt that this 4-million-year-old creature was fully adapted to walking, and the skull fragment shows that it had a brain the size of a chimpanzee's. "What this does is show that those two characteristics were a stable complex. There was plenty of time in a million years (until 3 million years ago) to show some brain expansion, but it just doesn't take place". The idea of a primitive small-brained biped, he says, completely undermines the Darwinian notion that upright walking evolved in response to tool use, which at the same time induced an enlargement of the brain.

At 4 million years old, the new fossils just barely penetrate the elusive Pliocene gap, of course, and the researchers are far more excited by the promise of the Awash. According to anthropologist J. Desmond Clark of the University of California at Berkeley (who led the expedition), the research team, without even looking systematically, discovered "an almost continuous fossil record" of animal species for the past 6 million years and a geological

"textbook" of rock layers that will reveal the world in which man evolved. The researchers will be returning to the Awash this fall to continue the search of the ape-man's first upright steps. "They've lifted the blind on the evolutionary era that tells the whole story", says Lovejoy. "That's what's exciting".

(From an article in Science News, June 12, 1982)

The Editors

WHO USED FIRE FIRST?

Could fire have been used nearly a million years earlier than previously thought? And did australopithecines - early hominids less evolved than our ancestor *Homo erectus* - use fire? These intriguing and controversial questions have been raised as a result of recent finds in Africa.

A predominantly British research team has uncovered more than 40 pieces of "burnt clay", or baked material, at a site in Chesowanja, Kenya. Dating shows these artifacts to be an astonishing 1.42 million years old. Previously, the oldest evidences of the controlled use of fire dated back only about half a million years.

The Chesowanja clay, the scientists concede, might have been burnt by accident - for example, by an uncontrolled bush fire. But this seems unlikely. A wild bush fire probably wouldn't bake clay, they claim, because such a fire would heat the clay's surface to an extremely high temperature but wouldn't bake the material just below the surface. Thus the team believes that the clay pieces were baked by a small, controlled fire.

Crocodile and hippopotamus bones and stone tools were found among the clay pieces; this evidence further fuels the argument that the clay-baking fire was controlled, and it also suggests that the site's principal inhabitants were meat-eaters. Yet, in close proximity, remains have been found of robust australopithecines - hominids who were primarily herbivores and probably did not use stone tools. How, then, are these australopithecine remains to be accounted for? And where are the remains of *Homo erectus*, thought to be the first fire user?

According to John W. Harris, a University of Wisconsin anthropologist and member of the Chesowanja research team, there are three possible explanations. The first, and most far-fetched, is that *Australopithecus* did not use fire and stone tools; the second, that *Homo erectus* abandoned the camp and *Australopithecus* stumbled on it, and died there by accident. A third possibility is that *Homo erectus* brought the australopithecines to the camp as captives and cannibalized them. To confirm any one of these scenarios, scientists must locate other sites similar to Chesowanja.

(From Science Digest, April 1982)

The Editors

OFFICIALS SAY \$400,000 SPENT ON WRONG FORT

Wetumpka - The Alabama Historical Commission has spent nearly \$400,000 to partially reconstruct what it thought was Fort Toulouse, a 1748 French fort on the Coosa River. But commission officials said yesterday the National Park Service has decided the foundation of the old wooden fort used to design the reconstruction is actually an American fort built in 1814 by Andrew Jackson.

Commission director Larry Oaks said the American fort was built on top of the old French fort and that about 40 percent of the French fort was destroyed. Oaks said construction on the fort in Elmore County, which began in 1972, was halted in 1979 until the park service determined the origin of the structure.

Archaeologist Mack Brooms said the commission has three options. It can tear down the three and a half log walls and three bastions built at the 150-acre site and start over, or it can modify the existing structure to resemble an American fort. Also, the commission could destroy one wall and half of another and reconstruct the 60 percent of the Fort Toulouse foundation that remains. Brooms said that would mean parts of both forts would be on the site.

"Elmore County is thoroughly upset", said Billie Jean Adams of the Elmore County Historical Commission. "We want Fort Toulouse". Oaks said the commission is expected to make a decision on the fort at an October meeting.

(United Press International - from the Birmingham Post-Herald, Wednesday, July 14, 1982)

The Editors

SPACE TECHNIQUES USED TO SEPARATE PAINTINGS HIDDEN BENEATH MASTER WORKS

Space scientists at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, working with art conservators at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, have developed a new technique for separating paintings hidden beneath master works.

The effort resulted in the first successful use of image enhancement techniques to separate X-ray images of paintings where two or more works exist on the same surface, according to museum officials.

The technique, derived from computer-processing of photographs from NASA's unmanned spacecraft, will allow art conservators and museum curators to better evaluate earlier compositions often found underneath easel paintings.

William R. Leisher, head of conservation at the Los Angeles Museum of Art, asked Jet Propulsion Laboratory investigators to separate and enhance a painting found to exist beneath the 17th century oil painting "The Crucifixion", by an unidentified Flemish painter.

Astronomer Dave Glackin and scientist Don Lynn, both image processing specialists, and computer analyst Raim Quiros, in collaboration with Jim Druzik and Dr. Pieter Meyers of the museum, developed computer programs for subtracting the top painting from the bottom so that the hidden painting may be seen in detail.

Art conservators commonly use X-ray photography to examine paintings. The X-ray photos may often show that paintings or sketches exist beneath a top painting, but the works are not automatically delineated. The two works usually are fused in an X-ray photo and appear as a blurred, double image.

"What we sometimes find is a completely different composition underneath", said Druzik, associate conservator at the museum.

Results from the project, supported by a grant from the Armand Hammer Foundation, should determine how to best preserve the works.

Future applications of computer processing to art conservation might include techniques to date paintings by determining the age of wood on which compositions were painted. Dendrochronology, the science of dating wood based on the number and character of tree rings, usually requires shaving wood away from the edge of the original wood panel. Computer enhancement of the wood grain of a panel would eliminate the need to remove original support material in order to date it.

(From the Marshall [Space Flight Center] Star, June 2, 1982)

The Editors

A. A. S. ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Alabama Archaeological Society is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, November 20. The meeting will be held in Huntsville. The Program Committee, headed by Jim Lee of Huntsville, is working on what promises to be an interesting and informative meeting. Details will appear in future issues of the Stones & Bones.

The Editors

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Available issues of <i>Journal of Alabama Archaeology</i> Vol. 13-18	\$1.00 pp
Vol. 20-24 (\$2.50 to Members)	\$4.00 pp
<i>Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations</i> (<i>Journal of Alabama Archaeology</i>) Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2-Reprint	\$5.00 pp
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Special Publication 2 – <i>The Archaeological Sequence at Durant Bend, Dallas County, Alabama</i>	\$4.50 pp
Special Publication 3 – <i>Archaeological Investigations at Horseshoe Bend</i>	\$6.50 pp
<i>Handbook of Alabama Archaeology Part 1, Point Types</i>	\$7.35 pp
Lively, Long, Josselyn - <i>Pebble Tool Paper</i>	\$3.00 pp
<i>Investigations in Russell Cave</i> , published by the National Park Service	\$5.00 pp
<i>Exploring Prehistoric Alabama through Archaeology</i> (Juvenile)	\$7.00 pp

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 1 Mound State Monument, Moundville, Alabama 35474

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