

Alabama Archaeological Society

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FAKE FLUTED POINTS

(Editors' Note: The following report was filed several years ago by one of our members; we thought our readers would still find the information timely.)

During the late spring and early summer months the writer made several trips around north Alabama, observing collections. Hearing of a large Redstone type, reputed to have been found in the Harvest area of Madison County, the writer made contact with a second party to borrow it from the owner for observation.

When the point was in my possession I immediately made a hand drawing of both faces and jotted down its dimensions in case the photographs were no good. This proved to be the case, as the point was returned before the film was developed. There was no chance to make any more pictures. Although it was a masterpiece of a flint chipper's art, several characteristics stood out that made me think it was a fake. 1) It was too perfect; 2) It was too thick; 3) There was no smoothing of the hafting area edges; 4) It has no patination or oxidation scars from coming in contact with the plow (however, this latter could be ruled out). All in all, it was too perfect and looked as if it was made yesterday.

Little did I realize at the time that I was to run across two more large fake Clovis points and a Plainview or unfluted Clovis. These points matched the Redstone in the same type of stone, same chipping technique; all four had been traded for or bought from dealers. All are owned by Alabama men.

Figure 1: Fake Redstone, natural size. Figure 2: Fake Clovis, slightly enlarged. Figure 3: Fake Clovis, slightly enlarged. Figure 4: Fake Plainview point or unfluted Clovis; obverse face is natural size, while reverse face is slightly enlarged. This point had been dipped in varnish to make it pretty and shiny and to obscure the fake scars. When the writer cleaned the point with solvent, the moon-like rotten-flint scar showed up above center to the left on the obverse face. This moon-shaped imperfection showed up in two of the other specimens, as follows. Figure 1: Reverse face right side, approximately one inch above base. Figure 2: Reverse face in center, just above midsection. Whoever is making these points is using a dark-blue flint local to north Alabama and southern Tennessee. Figures 1, 2 and 3 measure 10 mm thick above flutes. At the Scottsboro, Alabama "First Monday", one collector told the writer a dealer showed him some 50 fake Clovis points in all sizes, colors and prices.

Ed Mahan
Guntersville

June 1981

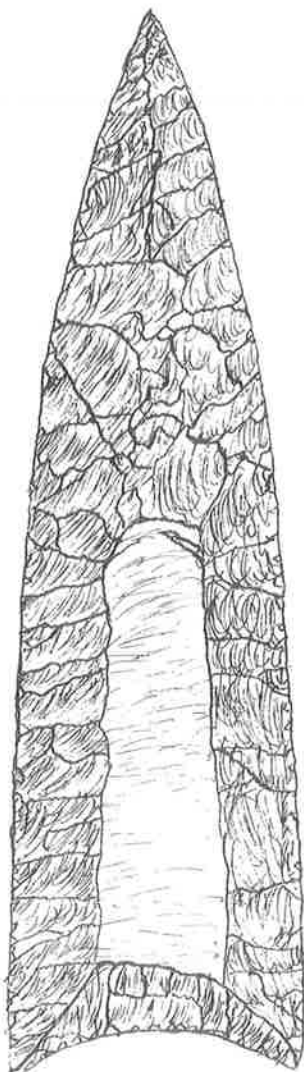


Figure 1

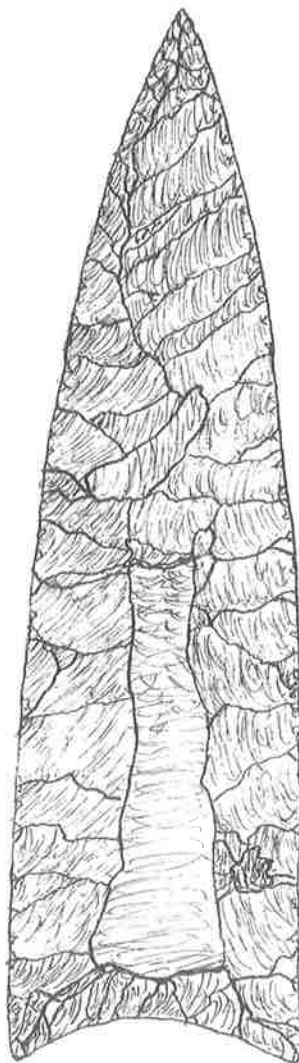
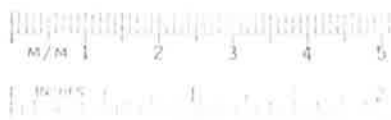


Figure 1a



Figure 4

Figure 4a



Photographs by Dr. A. G. Long



Figure 2



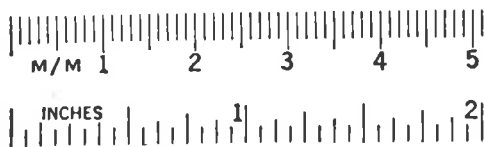
Figure 2a



Figure 3



Figure 3a



CHAPTER NEWS

Birmingham Chapter

The Birmingham Chapter meets the second Thursday of each month at the Red Mountain Museum. Call Tom Hutto for further information at 956-1895.

Cullman Chapter

If you missed the field trip to Moundville, you missed a fine opportunity to see not only the best archaeological site of the state, but also a grand tour of the lab facilities of the Office of Archaeological Research, University of Alabama. Carey Oakley took us through the new lab building, giving us many thoughts on the process and research side of archaeology. Those participating were: Ron and Eric Morrow, Mr. and Mrs. Dewitt Coleman, Mrs. Simmons and Bobby Simmons, Eulis King, Mr. and Mrs. Howard King, Brett and Jill King, David Farrar and Michael Lindsey.

Our program for May was a film entitled "Seeking the First Americans". This is an excellent film concerning Paleo Man, making of flint spear points, and new ideas of early-man techniques in arriving in America.

East Alabama Chapter

The speaker at the May meeting was N. Bayne Cranford, geologist, who spoke on rock types used by Alabama and other Indians. For the June meeting John Cottier will talk about North American Indians.

This chapter meets on the first Thursday of each month in Room 2169, Haley Center, Auburn University; at 7:30 p.m. For information call Baker Dean, Jr. at 745-2494.

Huntsville Chapter

Bart Henson, Chairman of the Publications Committee and Huntsville Chapter member, gave the May 19 program. Bart made a slide presentation on the 1960-63 excavations sponsored by the A. A. S. at the Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter in northwest Alabama. This presentation is the first in a series being prepared by the Publications Committee for use in schools, civic organization meetings, etc.

Muscle Shoals Chapter

The Muscle Shoals Chapter held its May meeting on the 11th at the Indian Mound Museum in Florence. Al Beinlich led the study on the "Point of the Month", which was the Pickwick. Several members brought examples of Piciwick points. The program was a "show-and-tell" session, with members showing artifacts and telling interesting stories about finding them or about the artifacts themselves. The June meeting will be a hamburger cook-out/picnic on top of the Indian Mound in Florence. The program that evening will be a point identification session conducted by John Adams. The time will be 6:00 p.m. on June 8.

GOOD NEWS FOR MEMBERS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETIES!

A special reduced-price subscription to the *North American Archaeologist* at only \$15.00 is offered to members of your Archaeological Society.

NORTH AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGIST . . . A Quarterly Journal

Editor: ROBERT L. SCHUYLER

The explosive growth in the field of American archaeology is dividing the archaeological community along disciplinary and institutional lines. A crisis situation exists in which archaeologists in the academic world become isolated from their colleagues in Resource Management and in government agencies. These groups, in turn, are failing to interact with the expanding membership of state and local archaeological societies. Researchers in the new area of historical archaeology are also moving away from those in prehistoric studies because of the rise in the number of regional and national meetings, and the proliferation of journals and societies.

The *North American Archaeologist* counterbalances this splintering process. It is a unique archaeological publication in several important aspects. The *North American Archaeologist* is the only general journal dedicated solely to North America, with a total coverage of archaeological activity in the United States, Canada, and northern Mexico, excluding Mesoamerica. The *North American Archaeologist* surveys all aspects of prehistoric and historical archaeology within an evolutionary perspective. Major topics consistently covered are:

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Urban Archaeology

The *North American Archaeologist* regularly includes research resulting from activities within state and regional societies. More extensive treatment of selected topics of high general appeal is provided by the publication of an annual monograph in the *Baywood Monographs in Archaeology* Series.

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CHRISTINE WIMBERLY

Christine Wimberly, long-time member of the Alabama Archaeological Society, has recently had a book published entitled "Exploring Prehistoric Alabama Through Archaeology". The book is written for 9th-grade level and is intended for supplemental textbook use in the schools. It may soon be available to the general public. The book contains many illustrations with easy-flow reading. It takes the reader through the various prehistoric Indian cultures in Alabama - from Paleo through Mississippian. Even though the thrust is at the 9th-grade level, the book contains much basic data on Indian cultures that would be of interest to many adults. Hopefully we will later be able to give you information on how to obtain this interesting book.

The Editors

INDIAN CURRENT AFFAIRS

If you are interested in Indian current affairs in Alabama write to the following address and ask to be placed on their mailing list. Alabama Indian Advocate; Perry Hill Office Park, Suite 211; 3815 Interstate Court; Montgomery, Alabama 36109. Telephone: 205/832-3829 or 205/277-8440.

Margaret Chase
Montgomery

"CIRCLE THE WAGONS"

John Hambly may have been the first to record how the wagons were circled as a defense against Indian attacks. Hambly was an employee of Pantan & Leslie Co. (merchants and traders out of Pensacola in the late 1700s and early 1800s) and was frequently sent on various trips into the Creek country. He kept a diary of these trips, and an entry dated July 26, 1794 describes how Major General Clarke of the Georgia Militia, while on a foray into southwest Georgia, had prepared his troops for the night. One of the Creeks told Hambly "that Gn. Clarke had moved over the Indian Line with a number of men and was on their side of a Creek named Chulla Puchka - that him and another who was with him endeavoured to see what their numbers might be and to try to get some of their horses which they found impracticable - as their waggon were all drawn up in a circle and at night their horses were all tied within this circle of waggons, and that outside the waggons they kept large fires all night - and in the day time they kept Centrys all around them besides a number of men on horse back who scoured the Country for some distance around which made these two Indians afraid to go about much in the day time...."

(From Volume 34, Florida Historical Quarterly)

The Editors

INSTITUTE OF NAUTICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

A new branch of archaeology - nautical archaeology - came into being in the late 1950s. Prior to that time, objects of historical interest had been raised from seas, rivers and lakes by sport divers or as chance finds of fishermen. The decade of the 1960s was devoted to the development of techniques for the scientific study of undersea archaeological remains. George F. Bass and Michael L. Katzev pioneered this effort with excavations of Bronze Age, Greek, Roman and Byzantine shipwrecks.

In 1973 the Institute of Nautical Archaeology was founded as a non-profit, scientific/educational organization. INA's purpose is to gather knowledge of man's past as left in the physical remains of his maritime activities and disseminate this information through scientific and popular publications, seminars and lectures.

Initially, INA staff members concentrated efforts in the Mediterranean and Aegean seas. An enlarged staff has allowed the Institute to become active on four continents, studying ship remains covering a range of 3,300 years.

INA supports a variety of related endeavors, ranging from research in the treatment of waterlogged wood to the study of transport amphoras, to the investigation of past sea-level changes and the excavation of harbor towns.

INA operates on grants from foundations, scientific organizations, public subscriptions, and the modest type of income normally obtained from teaching programs and seminars. Institute membership and donations are tax deductible. Regular membership is \$15 (or more, but under \$100); membership privileges include a year's subscription to the Institute newsletter, underwater archaeology books at special rates, sets of slides of underwater projects at cost, and Institute scientific reports.

The Editors

TOKEN IMPRESSIONS MARK EARLY WRITING

Impressed markings made on clay tablets dug up around the Euphrates River in Mesopotamia are believed to be the earliest examples of writing. These crude signs, which date to about 3,000 B.C., appear to be a logical step in the evolution of a system of record keeping that began approximately 11,000 years ago. A new decipherment of these seminal writing samples supports and broadens this theory.

This work grew out of previous explorations into the meaning of clay tokens reported by Denise Schmandt-Besserat of the University of Texas in the June 1978 SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN. She hypothesized that the first tokens appeared early in the Neolithic period around 8,500 B.C. because a newly-developing agricultural economy required a recording system, especially for food storage.

Fourteen tokens of different shapes, plus several others, were analyzed for their references to food, goods and numbers.

Significant changes in the recording system occurred early in the Bronze Age, between 3,500 and 3,100 B.C., as the development of an urban economy, rooted in trade, brought about a more complex business accountancy. Parallel lines and perforations, explains the researcher, began to appear on tokens, and some tokens were strung together as records of transactions.

(From an article in SCIENCE NEWS; January 17, 1981)

The Editors

SUMMER ARCHAEOLOGY

Case Western Reserve University is offering several opportunities to explore archaeology. Under the guidance of the Archaeology Laboratory and David R. Bush as the Instructor, these programs are geared to meet the needs of a variety of persons from those with merely a fascination for archaeology to those seeking expert training in archaeological field and laboratory techniques. Each program varies in terms of the aspects of Northeast Ohio prehistory and archaeological techniques which are covered.

The programs consist of Summer in the Country (June 4, 11, 18, 25), Archaeological Field School (June 23-August 7), Weekly Archaeology Workshops (May 26-30, June 15-19, August 24-28, August 31-September 4), and Flint Knapping Workshop (September 26). For more information, write to David R. Bush; Department of Anthropology; Room 3, Yost Hall; Case Western Reserve University; Cleveland, Ohio 44106.

The Editors

NEW MEMBERS

Griffin, Dr. Ronnie R. (I)

508 Country Club Road
Sylacauga, Alabama 35150

New World Research, Inc.

c/o Dr. Prentice M. Thomas
Box 410
Pollock, Louisiana 71467

Watkins, Mrs. J. P. (I)

P. O. Box 2565
Gulfport, Mississippi 39503

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> (Journal of Alabama Archaeology) Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2- Reprint)	\$5.00 pp
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Special Publication 3 — <i>Archaeological Investigations at Horseshoe Bend</i>	\$6.50 pp
<i>Handbook of Alabama Archaeology Part I, 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 Parks Service	\$5.00 pp

CHECKS SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO: **ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

MAIL CHECKS TO: **MR. EUGENE FUTATO, Office of Archaeological Research**
1 Mound State Monument, Moundville, Alabama 35474

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