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Stones & Bones

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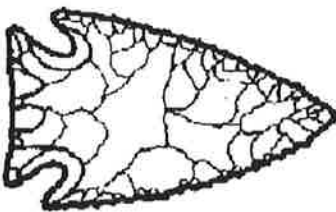
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University of Alabama Museum Wins Atlanta Olympics Honor

The Moundville Native American Festival has won one of the prestigious Regional Designation Awards presented by the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games from dozens of entries submitted in a 12-state area. The annual festival, sponsored by Moundville Archaeological Park, a unit of the University of Alabama Museums, is the largest and one of the most highly acclaimed celebrations of Native American culture and crafts in the Southeast.

Dr. Roger Sayers, president of the University of Alabama, said: "We are thrilled that the Olympic organizers have recognized something we have long known--that Moundville and its Native American festival are national treasures. The University of Alabama is proud to be the caretaker of this most important Native American site, and we hope the attention drawn to the South due to the Olympics leads many more people from around the world to discover Moundville's history and beauty."

According to Festival organizer Betsy Jones, "This year the Festival added some exciting new

features in addition to the traditional basketweaving, beadworking, silversmithing, and pottery making. We had a living history panorama which showed visitors how life in the Black Warrior Valley was lived hundreds of years ago in an Indian village or hunting camp. Saturday's Indian Market demonstrated Native American arts and crafts along with authentic Indian foods and a native stickball game. Representatives from the Creeks, Cherokees, Seminoles, and Choctaws demonstrated singing, dancing, and storytelling.

The Moundville Archaeological site was described by writers as early as 1848. During the late 19th century, archaeologists from the Smithsonian investigated the site and confirmed that more than twenty mounds were built by prehistoric Native Americans. When C.B. Moore, a wealthy gentleman from Philadelphia, steamed up the river and excavated in the mounds, he visited State Geologist Dr. Eugene Allen Smith, director of the Alabama Museum of Natural History and University professor, to view the famous Rattlesnake Disk, a unique Mississippian artifact from Moundville. Dr. Smith's successor, Dr. Walter B. Jones, led the Civilian Conservation Corps excavation project during the 1930's. During the 1940's and 1960's, David DeJarnette brought modern methods to the archaeological investigations at Moundville. Since then, the mounds have

not been excavated until Dr. Vernon James Knight started his current investigations in 1989, the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the park and the year of the first annual Moundville Native American Festival.

Next year's Native American Festival will be held September 30 - October 5, 1996. For information about the Moundville Native American Festival, call (205) 371-2572.

Moundville Archaeological Park Receives Grant

Moundville Archaeological Park has received a grant for \$139,000 for acquisition and restoration of a nature trail at the 300-acre park, according to Paul Jones, director.

According to Douglas Jones, Executive Director of University of Alabama Museums, "We expect the Intermodal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act (ISTEA) funds will support a portion of the more than \$8 million worth of improvements slated for the park within the next 5-10 years. Besides a new archaeological museum, we plan for a broad corridor of nature trails and outdoor recreation areas, additional recreational facilities and campground improvements.

Among the projects to be assisted by the ISTEA grant are the construction of a 200-meter trail to the Indian Village restoration area, an 800-meter Riverside Nature Trail, a 666-meter Carthage Branch Nature Trail, and the acquisition of the 37-hectare "Rhodes" archaeological site, adjacent to the park.

When completed, the full range of Native American flora and fauna will be accessible to the tens of thousands of school children who come to Moundville Archaeological Park each year. The trails will allow interpretation of the park's archaeology and the lifeways of Southeastern Indians. The project will also provide cultural awareness and understanding of Alabama history unavailable in any other location. For more information about future plans for the park or the ISTEA grant, call Paul Jones, (205) 371-2234.

Summary of 1995 Excavations at Beartail Rockshelter

The dual purpose of the Beartail Rockshelter Legacy Project are to: (1) Acquire scientific information about the first humans to occupy this part of the world; and, (2) acquire scientific knowledge about the nature of the physical environment at the time they lived here.

In order to do this we had to first discover and recognize the horizon of soil that represents the span of time during which Ice Age environmental conditions shifted to modern environmental conditions; and second, discover artifacts of human presence on the site at the appropriate dates. We achieved these goals during the 1995 season of field excavations. What remains is to collect a sufficient number of specimens and an appropriate variety of scientific samples to provide the information we seek..

What We Know About the Sequence of Human and Natural Events That Have Occurred at Beartail Rockshelter.

1. Prior to 10,500 years ago a cataclysmic rockfall occurred, during which the overhanging limestone roof of the rockshelter collapsed and was deposited at the foot of the bluff.

2. By at least 10,500 years ago humans were occupying the shelter, living on top of the debris from the rockfall. There is ample and positive evidence that the top of the debris had been occupied at an even earlier time; perhaps only a little before 10,500 B.P., or perhaps a long time before.

3. Deeply buried alluvial clays, deposited by the Tennessee River during the distant past appear to underlie the rocky debris of the roof collapse. These clays contain flint chips and tiny particles of charcoal, suggesting human presence before the collapse of the roof. These clays are the

appropriate soil horizon for studying late-Pleistocene (Ice Age) weather conditions.

4. Charcoal samples have been taken from the earliest evidence of human occupation on top of the rockfall, and also from the alluvial clays which may contain the evidence of still earlier human occupations.

What We Plan to do During Future Seasons

1. We need to recover a larger sample of artifacts both from the deposits at the top of the slope and those at the foot of the slope.

The artifacts from the lowest zones within the shelter constitute a complete assemblage of tools from a Paleo-Indian site unmixed with late remains. This is very rare in the Eastern United States, and consequently will be a very valuable asset for American Archaeologists.

The alluvial clay seems to pre-date the rockfall. Any artifacts found within it, therefore, are even older than those found on top. It is imperative that we excavate a significant unit of these soils.

The alluvial clay at the foot of the slope represents the interface between Ice Age environmental conditions and essentially modern environmental conditions. We must acquire a full array of soil samples and Carbon-14 samples which will be informative about that period of time.

Much of what we have learned will not become obvious until we have gone to the laboratory and analyzed the materials we have collected. Only when that has been completed can we make positive plans for the 1996 investigations. What we can say is that Beartail Rockshelter is an important site in Alabama prehistory.

*Submitted by: Charles Hubbert
Office of Archaeological Services, Univ. of
Al, Moundville..*

What's Happening Around the State

Panamerican Consultants, Inc., has recently completed Phase II and Phase III investigations in Conecuh County, Alabama. The site, called Coahatchee (1Cc53), was excavated for the Alabama Department of Transportation. The site is primarily a Late Woodland Weeden Island site. The large collection of ceramics are comprised of various elaborate designs characteristic of that period. Earlier material was also found to date to the Early Archaic through Gulf Formational periods. Laboratory analysis is currently ongoing for the project.

Panamerican Consultants, Inc. also recently conducted a Phase II investigation of one large Late Archaic/Early Woodland site and three 20th century historic homesites for the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. 1Ma279, a prehistoric lithic scatter, spanned over 800 meters in length and consisted of a series of Late Archaic and Early Woodland occupations.

The Phase II operations consisted of the placement of twelve one by one meter test units and twelve grader stripped areas. The units demonstrated that the area in question was severely affected by historic landuse activities and essentially the sites' integrity were virtually destroyed. It was hoped that the grader stripping would reveal prehistoric and historic features. However, no features were located during these operations.

*Submitted by: Terry Lolley
Panamerican Consultants, Inc.*

The Troy State University Archaeological Research Center completed Phase II investigations in Ashford for the Department of Transportation. Two of the five sites that were excavated may go into Phase III mitigation in 1996. TSUARC will also be conducting a reconnaissance survey on the Choccolocco Creek, near Anniston, from December 18-22.

Looting in American Southwest Is Destroying Heritage

For nearly 20 years, Earl Shumway robbed graves and broke into long-sealed Indian homes, all the while boasting that the chances of his ever getting caught were one in a million.

To archaeologists of the American Southwest, accustomed to sifting through desert sand for fine distinctions, the very mention of Mr. Shumway's name prompts sweeping denunciation. To them he is the worst kind of burglar - someone who steals from people's heritage. "He is a moki poacher," said Larry Davis, an archaeologist and chief ranger for Anasazi Indian Village State Park, using a term with which the Hopi Indians describe someone who robs from the dead. "He is the No. 1 looter in the United States," said David Tarler, who tracks archaeological crimes for the National Park Service in Washington.

Today, Shumway sits in jail in Salt Lake City, facing what the Justice Department calls the most extensive list of Federal Archaeological Crimes ever committed by one person. He could get up to 30 years after being convicted of seven felony counts of stealing Anasazi artifacts. Shumway pleaded guilty to some of the charges, including one of grave-robbing in Dop-Ki Cave in Canyonlands National Park, in which he robbed the grave of an infant, tearing its blanket away and looting the grave of all valuable objects. This was not an unusual crime for him: he once boasted of having used a bulldozer to plunder through an Indian ruin. But to Indians, disturbing the bones of the dead is akin to ripping the soul apart. "What he did was just sacrilege," said Joe Dishta, director of heritage and historic preservation for the Zuni Indians. "They are our ancestors. They were put in the grave in such a way to effect their journey to the spirit world."

While the convictions have heartened the handful of people who patrol more than 50

million acres of public rich land in remnants from long-dead communities, the problem of archaeological looting here, they say, has never been worse. In October, four men were indicted in this state on charges of plundering a site near the town of Moab that contained some of the oldest artifacts ever found in North America, dating from the Paleo-Indian period of 11,000 years ago.

The problem for law enforcement is that the area is so big, the officers so few, and the rewards for plundering are rich. Only four agents patrol the 22 million acres of bureau land in Utah, and Congress, in cutting the Federal Budget, is considering elimination of even those positions.

The major Federal law protecting "antiquities," as they were called in the statute, was passed in 1906. In 1979, Congress passed a much stronger law, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, making it a felony to take an artifact from public land.

Looters rob scientists of their ability to answer certain questions, and no one has ripped a bigger hole in the fabric of Anasazi archaeological knowledge than Shumway, officials say. "The biggest question we are trying to answer is why people do what they do," said David Madsen, Utah's State Archaeologist. "One of the theories about the Anasazi is that they destroyed their ecosystem. We always think prehistoric people were in tune with nature. Well, they're just people. And these artifacts can help us understand what they did to themselves." Mr. Madsen also pointed out that most looters generally don't know any better, most are tourists or campers. He stressed that taking artifacts out of context is the worst thing you can do.

As for "professional looters," one of the many terms Mr. Madsen uses to describe Shumway, museums or black-market dealers are what keep them going. Some Anasazi pottery, intact, can fetch more than \$100,000 in Europe. Shumway used to claim that he could make \$5,000 a day. The major museums now require certificates that an artifact was obtained legally. But there is still a booming black market.

"The market is probably the single most important factor in looting of archaeological

resources," said Mr. Tarler. " You have auction houses selling things, and even bones-which is flat out illegal-taken from looted sites. You wouldn't buy a TV from the back of a van, but people don't use the same logic for Indian artifacts."

But investigations of auction houses are rare, Federal officials say, because it is so difficult to track the origin of an artifact. Sellers are required to prove that an Indian relic was bought through legal channels.

As for Earl Shumway, he will be sentenced this month and Federal prosecutors say they will ask that he be put away longer than anyone ever convicted of archaeological crimes in this country.

(Taken from The New York Times, Nov.2, 1995.) Submitted by Amos Wright-Huntsville Chapter member.

Chapter News

Coosa Valley...

The Coosa Valley Chapter held its monthly meeting on November 29, 1995. Following a short business meeting our guest speaker Cathy Roach gave an interesting presentation on "Archaeology in Costa Rica." Ms. Roach is part of the professional staff at the Anniston Museum of Natural History and has spent six months in Costa Rica on archaeological excavations.

The Coosa Valley Chapter meets monthly at 7:30 p.m. in Martin Hall, Room 221 on Jacksonville State University campus. For more information on the Chapter, call (205) 782-5656 or 782-5604.

Huntsville...

The Huntsville Chapter meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. The last meeting was November 28, and was held at the First Baptist Church on Governors Drive, Room 343. The public is welcome to the meetings.

Rick Bowman gave a slide presentation on pottery at the November meeting. The Chapter voted at the October meeting not to have a meeting or party in December since it is such a busy month. The Chapter will not meet again until January 23.

Troy State University...

The TSU Chapter did not hold a meeting in December since the University is closed for the Christmas break. However, chapter members traveled together to attend the AAS Winter Meeting in Selma.

New Members

The new members of the Alabama Archaeological Society are:

Archaeological Conservancy
Alan Gruber, Regional Director
5997 Cedar Crest Road
Ackworth, Ga 30101

Citronelle Memorial Library
ATTN: Deborah Craft
7855 State St
Citronelle Al 36522

In the Alabama Archaeological Society's Past

10 years ago in December, 1985, the Birmingham Chapter met at the Red Mountain Museum, with Dr. Jim Knight as the speaker. Dr. Knight presented a lecture along with slides of the old Creek Village site of Tukabatchee, located on the Tallapoosa River.

The Huntsville Chapter held a December meeting/Christmas party with about 30 members

attending due to the bitter cold and snow. Elections for offices were held.

The Tuscaloosa Chapter's speaker for December 1985 was Rick Walling, President of the Chapter. He spoke on recent excavations on an earthen Civil War fort built in 1862 by Union forces on the Tennessee River near Stevenson, Alabama.

(Taken from January 1986 issue of Stones & Bones)

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Available issues of *Journal of Alabama Archaeology*

- Vol. 20-31, each issue (*two issues per volume*).....\$3.50pp
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- Stanfield- Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations* (Journal of Alabama Archaeology)
 - Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint.....\$7.50pp
- Special Publication 2 - *The Archaeological Sequence at Durant Bend, Dallas County Alabama*.....\$6.00pp
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- Handbook of Alabama Archaeology Part I, Point Types*.....\$15.00pp
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