

# Alabama Archaeological Society

## Stones & Bones

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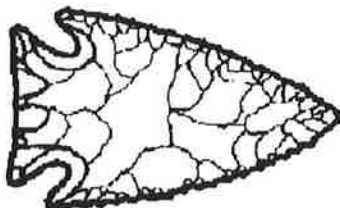
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### AAS Summer Field School

The Alabama Archaeological Society will hold its annual summer field school this year at the historic Creek site of Fusahatchee in Elmore County. The AAS field school will be held in conjunction with the Auburn University and Auburn University in Montgomery field school. Dr. John Cottier and Dr. Craig Sheldon have been working on this site for over 10 years. Fortunately, they have managed to salvage most of the archaeological data from gravel mining operation and they played a major role in acquiring the recent easement of 80 acres, donated to the Alabama Historical Commission.

Take advantage of the opportunity to work on one of the richest and most important historic Indian sites in Alabama and the Southeast. The field school will be operated much like it has the last few years with individuals having the opportunity to participate at 1 week intervals during June and July. Interested members should contact Eugene Futato at 205-371-2266 for More information. Watch for specifics in the April Stones & Bones.

### Midsouth Archaeological Conference

The 16th annual Midsouth Archaeological Conference will be held on June 3rd and 4th (Saturday and Sunday), at the Old Capitol Museum, 100 South State St., Jackson, Mississippi. The theme of this year's conference will be "The Archaeology of Exchange in the Midsouth." Papers concerning all facets of prehistoric, proto-historic, and historic trade are welcome. Papers dealing with prehistoric distribution networks are especially encouraged. Lodging will be available at the Cabot Lodge/ on County Line Road off Interstate 55. Room rates are \$64.00 per night. A suite of rooms will be reserved for Friday, June 2nd, and Saturday, June 3rd. Phone number for the hotel is 1-800-342-2268. A free continental breakfast is served.

Anyone interested in giving a paper should submit a title and abstract to Evan Peacock, Midsouth Program Chair, 407 Myrtle St., Starkville, MS 39759, by May 1st. Paper length will be 20 minutes. Participants and attendees are encouraged to bring artifacts and raw materials for hands-on viewing. Questions concerning paper

presentations or special equipment needs should be addressed to Evan Peacock (601) 285-3264 or (601) 325-3826. Questions concerning lodging, local attractions, restaurants, etc. should be addressed to Sam Brookes (601) 965-5518. A map showing the location of the Old Capitol Museum and a restaurant guide will be available in the hotel lobby.

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## What's Happening Around the State

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**Troy State University.** South Alabama river systems have a history of causing extensive flood damage. Flooding has the potential to damage or destroy contemporary resources, but can also have a less publicized impact on Alabama's significant cultural resources. Destruction of cultural resources continue to occur at an alarming rate from the effects of river flooding as well as timber removal, agriculture, construction, and looting. It has become increasingly important to preserve the remnants of our cultural heritage by all available means. Measures are currently being taken by Troy State University Archaeological Research Center and the Alabama Historical Commission to record and assess archaeological sites that are being impacted by floods.

In order to begin this essential process of protecting our cultural resources, Troy State University Archaeological Research Center will be conducting a survey of portions of the Choctahatchee, Conecuh, and Pea Rivers during the next few months. These three rivers were chosen for this study because all have a history of severe flooding (the worst in the state annually) and none of these rivers fall under the protection of the Corps of Engineers. Past research and information from local informants suggest that these rivers also possess abundant archaeological resources.

Troy State University Archaeological Research Center is using several methods to gain information about known archaeological sites. One

of the most efficient methods employed is through the use of local informants. Anyone who has information on prehistoric or historic sites along the Pea, Conecuh, and Choctahatchee Rivers or their tributaries such as the Sepulga River, Yellow River, Pigeon Creek, and Patsilegi Creek is encouraged to participate in preserving South Alabama's cultural prehistory and history by sharing this vital information with us. This information will be used as a base for the development of a cultural resource management plan which will be used in prioritizing federal and state funding for flood control measures. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

If you have knowledge of historic or prehistoric sites within the Pea, Conecuh, and Choctahatchee River drainage basins, please contact the Troy State University Archaeological Research Center at (334) 670-3638 or write to 304 Wallace Hall, TSU, Troy, AL 36082.

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## The Permian Catastrophe

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Life on Earth nearly ended 245 million years ago at the end of the Permian period. At this time roughly 95 percent of all species disappeared-the most catastrophic mass extinction ever. In contrast, only half of all the species died out during the extinction 65 million years ago that killed the dinosaurs. Paleontologists blame this catastrophe on a climate change that took place gradually over millions of years. But geochemist Kun Wang of the University of Ottawa disagrees. "The extinction was very abrupt, it could have been a few years, or a few thousands years, but it wasn't millions of years."

Wang's evidence comes from a 245 million year old stack of sedimentary rocks at Williston Lake in British Columbia which consist of fossilized remains of microscopic sea plants called phytoplankton. Wang and his colleagues measured the ratio of carbon 13 to carbon 12 in the rocks.

During photosynthesis phytoplankton, like all plants, prefer the lighter carbon 12 and only

take up carbon 13 because there is so much competition for carbon 12. In the 19-foot-thick sediments that Wang studied, the carbon ratios remained more or less constant. But in the upper inches of the deposit which corresponds to a time span of a few thousands years at the Permian close, they found a sudden drop in the ratio of carbon 13 to carbon 12. Wang suggests that the reason there was plenty of carbon 12 to go around was probably caused by a major catastrophe that wiped out most of the phytoplankton. With less competition for carbon 12, these survivors were not as pressed to absorb the carbon 13. When they died and sank to the ocean floor, they carried little carbon 13 with them.

Wang suggests that one possible reason for the nature of this catastrophe was a massive volcano in Siberia, where there are lava deposits dating from the end of the Permian period that cover an area larger than that of Alaska. The volcanoes may have produced enough ash and poisonous sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere to block sunlight and kill most of the phytoplankton, the lowest rung on the food chain. Other researchers have considered a huge meteor impact, which Wang admits that there is a possibility but he also finds a problem with it because there is simply not any evidence of an impact. The cause of the Permian catastrophe remains a mystery - but now it's a more sudden one (Taken from *Discover*, Dec. 1994).

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## In the Alabama Archaeological Society's Past

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Twenty-five years ago the AAS held their tenth annual fund drive. In attendance was Roger Nance who was working on the building of an archaeological library at the University of Alabama Birmingham.

For the Birmingham Chapter meeting Mrs. Jim McCary gave a slide show on the art museum of ancient Egypt.

The Cullman County Chapter had a general discussion of Paleo and Transitional Paleo projectile points.

At the March meeting of the Morgan-Limestone Chapter, Muscle Shoals Chapter president Fletcher Jolly spoke on "Excavation and Evaluation of Human Skeletal Remains".

Mr. LeBaron W. Pahmeyer spoke at the Muscle Shoals Chapter meeting on "The Archaeology of Russell Cave".

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## Chapter News

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### *Muscle Shoals Chapter...*

The Muscle Shoals Chapter held its November meeting at the Indian Mound Museum in Florence on November 14, 1994. Charles Moore presented a paper on Indian History in the Tennessee Valley. The prehistory portion of the program was based on written accounts by early explorers, traders, and settlers including Oliver Day Street, John Haygood, John R. Swanton, and Henry R. Schoolcraft.

There were reports of Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw and Shawnee occupation. The tribal boundaries changed considerably according to early accounts. Thirty members and guests attended.

The December meeting was a "show and tell" program following Christmas snacks of candy, cookies, cake, and punch. A lot of interesting artifacts with stories were shown and discussed. One of the most interesting stories was related by Mrs. J. M. Southall. She told about the Tennessee River before T.V.A. had built Wilson and Wheeler Dams. The main shoals area was Muscle Shoals, which extended from around the present location of Wilson Dam upstream for about 37 miles. During dry times of the year, it was possible to hop from rock to rock all the way across the river in many areas. Because of the shoals, Florence became the main year around steamboat port. Boats were unloaded in Florence and the cargoes were transported to Tuscumbia and later Sheffield

distributing goods on the Southern side of the river. Twenty eight guests and members were in attendance.

The January meeting was held on January 9, 1995. Jeff Meyer and Myron Estes, who have been working on a highway salvage excavation on Highway 20 in Lawrence County, reported on that project. The OAR excavations have yielded many artifacts of early components. Thirty-two members and guests attended.

After an afternoon on a petroglyph field trip in Colbert County, Bart Henson brought us an update on interesting rock art and other interesting sites he had visited in Alabama for the February 13th meeting. He stressed reporting and preservation of the many outstanding sites that we are blessed with in Alabama. Twenty-nine members and guests attended.

#### *East Alabama Chapter...*

Richard S. Fuller, Archaeological Research Assistant with the Gulf Coast Survey, from the Alabama Museum of Natural History located at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, presented our February program. He showed slides of five dugout canoes from the Mississippian style for the region. Twenty-five members were present for this meeting.

#### *Huntsville Chapter...*

The February chapter meeting was held Tuesday, February 28th. Charles Hubbert of the Huntsville Chapter was the speaker. Charles is a professional archaeologist who has been based in Huntsville for several years. He has long been active at the state and local levels of the Alabama Archaeological Society and has presented many programs over the years to our chapter as well as at the state annual meetings. He discussed his recent archaeological activities in the Huntsville area, with special emphasis on work he has done on Redstone Arsenal.

Chapter officers for 1995 were elected at the January meeting. President is Melissa Lehman; First Vice President (Programs): Gene Moritz;

Second Vice President (Publicity): Phillip Johnson; Secretary/Treasurer: Dawn Gillespie; and Librarian, Georgia Dunn.

#### *Tuscaloosa Chapter...*

The Tuscaloosa Chapter held their February meeting on Thursday, February 23, 1995. New officers for 1995 are as follows: President is Robby Hall; Vice-president is Gail House; and secretary is Paul Clements. The next meeting will be held on April 27, at 7:00 p.m., at the Tuscaloosa Public Library. Everyone is invited.

#### *Cullman County Chapter...*

The last meeting was held on March 20, 1995 at the Colonel Cullman Home. Our program for March was given by Ron Morrow. His program was on a multicomponent site on the West Flintcreek Water Shed.

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## The Calendar

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**Made in Alabama: A State Legacy** exhibit at Huntsville Museum of Art, VBCC. Described as "a landmark exhibition culminating a 9-year search throughout the state for ceramics, coverlets, furniture, paintings, photographs, metals and textiles that were made in the 19th century in Alabama."

**Florida Anthropological Society** will hold their 47th Annual Meeting on April 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>, 1995, at the Holiday Inn, Sebring, FL. The Kissimmee Valley Archaeological and Historical Conservancy will serve as host chapter. If you have any questions, write to: Anne Reynolds, KVAHC, FAS Meeting, 80 Bear Point Land, Lake Placid, FL 33852, or call (813) 465-3637. Deadline for submission of papers is Feb. 15, 1995. Send to: David Batty, FAS Annual Meeting Chair, KVAHC, 1320 Talbott Circle, Avon Park, FL 33825. Tele: (813) 453-4170.

**Central States Anthropological Society** will hold its 72nd annual meeting in Indianapolis, IN on March 9-12, 1995. Contact Larry Breitborde, Department of Anthropology, Beloit College, Beloit, WI 53511; (608) 363-2500.

**Society for American Archaeology** will be held May 3-7 in Minneapolis, MN. Contact SAA, 900 2nd St., NE #12, Washington, DC; (202) 789-8200, fax (202) 789-0284.

## PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Available issues of *Journal of Alabama Archaeology*

Vol. 20-31, each issue.....	\$ 3.50pp Vol.
32 & up, each issue.....	\$ 6.00pp
<i>Stanfield- Worley BluffSheiter Excavations</i> (Journal of Alabama Archaeology)	
Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint.....	\$ 7.50pp
Special Publication 2 - <i>The Archaeological Sequence at Durant Bend, Dallas County Alabama</i> .....	
	\$ 6.00pp
Special Publication 3 - <i>Archaeological Investigations at Horseshoe Bend</i> .....	\$ 8.00pp
<i>Handbook of Alabama Archaeology Part 1, Point Types</i> .....	\$15.00pp
Lively, Long, Josselyn - <i>Pebble Tool Paper</i> .....	\$ 3.00pp
<i>Investigations at Russell Cave</i> , published by the National Park Service.....	\$10.00pp
<i>Exploring Prehistoric Alabama through Archaeology</i> (Juvenile).....	\$ 9.00pp

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