

Alabama Archaeological Society

Stones & Bones

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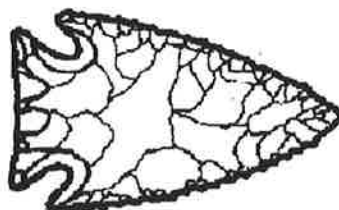
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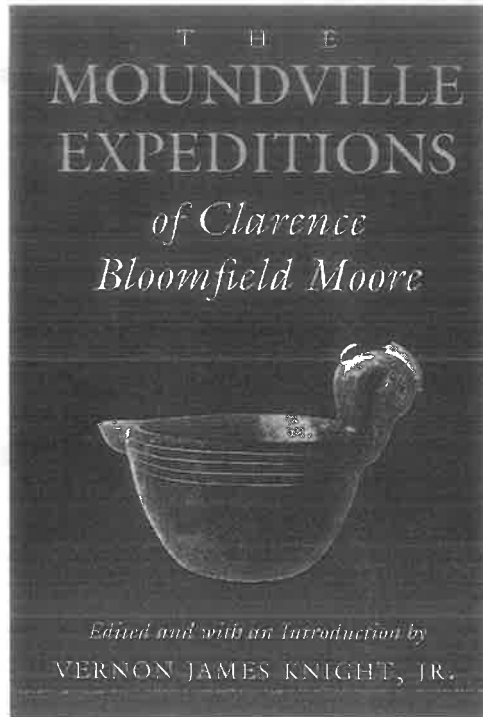
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Publications

The Moundville Expeditions of Clarence Bloomfield Moore. The two works reprinted in this volume represent the pinnacle of the career of one of the most remarkable American archaeologists of the early 20th century, Clarence Bloomfield Moore. His *Certain Aboriginal Remains of the Black Warrior River* (1905) and *Moundville Revisited* (1907) brought the Moundville site in Alabama to the attention of the scholarly world in dramatic fashion by offering a splendid photographic display and expert commentary on its artifactual richness. Moore was the leading southeastern specialist of his day and the most prolific excavator of the southern sites during the early part of the 20th century. Today Moore gives the impression of having been everywhere, having excavated everything, and having published on all of it. Moundville Expeditions contains facsimile reprints of these two classic works, along with a new scholarly introduction by one of the most leading authorities on the Moundville archaeological site. Once again these rare materials on Moundville are available both for scholars and for a general audience. \$29.95 plus s&h and sales tax (sales tax for Alabama residents). For more information contact:

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Calendar

November 5-8, 1997. The Southeastern Archaeological Conference will hold its 54th annual meeting at the Radisson Hotel in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. For more information contact:

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1260 Main Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
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January 7-11, 1998. The Society of Historical Archaeology and the Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology announce the SHA 1998 Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology to be held at the Crown Plaza Ravina Hotel in Atlanta. The conference host is Garrow & Associates, Inc. The 1998 conference themes, The American Civil War and the Postbellum Nation, reflect the development of Atlanta, but broadly cover the settlement and growth of the southern United States.

Chapter News

Huntsville Chapter...

The Huntsville Chapter meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm. Starting in June and thereafter meetings will be held the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm at the Huntsville Public Library. Van King presented a program on filling out site forms at the February meeting. The March meeting featured Charles Hubbert who gave an update on the Beartail Mountain Project. 1997 Officers are President: Van King; 1st Vice President: Ellis Whitt; 2nd Vice President: Thomas Piff; Secretary/Treasurer: Dawn Gillespie; Newsletter Editor: Bobbie Gillespie; Honorary Historian: Georgia Dunn.

East Alabama Chapter...

Instead of meeting in April, the chapter is planning a trip Sunday, April 27th to the Bean's Mill site on Halawaka Creek a few miles north of Opelika. Hosting the visit and tour of the old grist

mill will be local chapter member John Ross and wife Faye.

Troy State University...

The Troy State chapter held its March meeting on the 27th. Troy State's new anthropologist, Kathy Gilchrist spoke about her archaeological experiences in Isreal, Lousianna, and Alberta, Canada, her home. The chapter also planned a trip to Moundville and agreed to donate a tree to the TSU campus on Earth Day.

What's Happening Around the State

The University of Alabama, Office of Archaeological Services (OAS) Conducted Phase II archaeological testing along the northern margin of site 1Lu356; a large, multi-component archaeological site located along the western bank of Cypress Creek near the city of Florence, Lauderdale County, Alabama. The impetus for this testing program was to determine the presence of any important archaeological resources in the corridor in advance of a planned sewer line across the area associated with the proposed expansion of the Cypress Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility. Site 1Lu356 was originally recorded in 1987 by OAS personnel during an intensive cultural resources inventory of properties managed by the Tennessee Valley Authority along the Pickwick Reservoir. Site 1Lu356 was recorded as a large (110 m by 375 m) site located on the west bank of Cypress Creek approximately 400 m from its confluence with the Tennessee River. Surface exposure of the site revealed a moderate density scatter of lithic material with cultural material diagnostic of Late PaleoIndian, Early Archaic, and Middle Woodland occupations. The southern end of the site was restricted primarily to the terrace of Cypress Creek, while the northern end (area to be impacted by the proposed sewer line) extended from the creek bank to approximately 110 m west of the creek.

In December of 1996, Site 1Lu356 was re-evaluated by OAS during a cultural reconnaissance survey of the area to be impacted by the proposed sewer line. During this investigation, the western portion of the site was under cultivation, while the eastern portion of the site (located along the bank of Cypress Creek) was within a mature tree line. Visual inspection of the plowed area of Site 1Lu356 (adjacent to the tree line area to be impacted by the proposed sewer line route) revealed a large volume of cultural material. Initial probing of the site via shovel testing indicated that intact cultural deposits were buried beneath recent alluvial deposits with artifacts being encountered at a depth of *circa* 50 cm to 75 cm below present ground surface. However, the buried nature of the site precluded the ability to discern the depth, nature, and distribution of archaeological remains within this portion of Site 1Lu356 through shovel testing alone. As such, three backhoe slot trenches were excavated to reveal the general stratigraphic, and contextual characteristics of Site 1Lu356. The excavation of the three backhoe slot trenches confirmed the presence of well stratified, intact cultural deposits to a depth of approximately 1.5 m below the present ground surface.

Given the presence of intact, stratified archaeological deposits, Site 1 Lu356 demonstrated the potential for contributing to regional research problems concerning past prehistoric life-ways of the middle Tennessee River valley and was considered eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historical Places. As a result, an archaeological testing program consisted of the hand excavation of seven 1 m by 2 m test units along the proposed sewer line corridor. The testing program was conducted under the direction of Boyce N. Driskell (Principal Investigator) and Scott C. Meeks (Project Supervisor) during March and April of 1997. The following provides a brief synopsis of the results of this testing program as laboratory analysis is currently being conducted.

Four strata resulting from both natural and human activities were identified during the testing program. The upper stratum, a sterile deposit of recent alluvium, capped a shallow, cultural bearing deposit (Stratum II) containing a moderate

amount of material diagnostic of both a Middle Woodland (2250-1450 B.P.) occupation and an early Archaic (8900-7800 B.P.) bifurcate occupation. The primary occupation of the site, or at least the greatest amount of cultural material, was contained within Stratum III. This stratum was associated solely with a Kirk Corner Notched (9500-8300 B.P.) component and contained an impressive assortment of formal, curated tools including corner notched points, several formal scrapers, numerous biface fragments, and a large amount of lithic debitage.

The presence of an intact Kirk Corner Notched component at Site 1Lu356 makes it one of the few known intact, open air sites dating to this time period in the southeastern United States. Finally, the deepest identified stratum (Stratum IV-the water table precluded any further excavations below a depth of 1.6 m below the present ground surface) produced a small amount of cultural material including one uniface blade, one biface fragment, and a modest amount of lithic debitage. Although lacking diagnostic material, the presence of the overlying stratum containing the Kirk Corner Notched component suggests that this stratum dates at least to the early Holocene and possibly to the late Pleistocene. Support for early Holocene/late Pleistocene cultural deposits is based on the recovery of both Big Sandy and Dalton points from the plowed portion of the site adjacent to the area tested. However, a combination of test unit excavation, backhoe slot trenching, and auger testing suggests that such early cultural material *could not* have been plowed up in this area of the site. This raises an interesting question-*How did these early points come to reside in this portion of the site?* One possible explanation may be that a relic bank of Cypress Creek possessing early Holocene/late Pleistocene deposits exists to the west of the area tested. Lenses of Tuscaloosa gravel, most likely representing old stream beds of Cypress Creek, were identified during the testing program and suggest that Cypress Creek was actively moving eastward towards its present-day position. If this is the case, then plowing of this relic bank, if it does exist, may have resulted in the deflation and subsequent displacement of these older cultural bearing

deposits. This is, of course, but one possible explanation which needs to be investigated in the future.

(Submitted by Scott C. Meeks, University of Alabama Office of Archaeological Services)

Edward C. Mahan

In Alabama, among professional and amateur archaeologists, the name Edward C. Mahan is well known. His artifact collection, maps, and field notes, amassed during nearly 50 years of collecting and documenting sites in North Alabama, are an important part of the archaeological collection curated at UAB's Anthropological Research Laboratory. Because Mahan's work is so valuable it is important to introduce him and his family to the newer members of the Society who may not yet realize the great contributions amateurs can make to archaeology.

The Mahan family contributed greatly to the development of Central Alabama. They were among those who first settled the Brierfield area in Bibb county following the war of 1812. Brierfield grew into one of the largest towns in the state during the mid-to-late 19th century due to its position as an iron and coal center and also because of its manufacturing of cannons, iron-wares, pig-iron, and cut nails. The Mahans made much of this growth possible through the donation of land to the railroad for the right-of-way through the Mahan property, as well as land for the Confederate iron works at Brierfield. In a continued spirit of entrepreneurship the Mahans extended their interests to Central America where Mahan's father Jesse W. Mahan and his brother became developers of the banana industry. It was there in Colorado, Honduras August 9th, 1911, that Edward C. Mahan was born, one of four children, to Jesse and Rosa Mahan.

In 1915, Mahan's father passed away. His mother, a native of Honduras, brought the children to Brierfield, to be raised with their father's relatives. Edward, due to illness, lived with his

aunt, Adelaide Mahan, in Brierfield while his mother and siblings came to Birmingham.

The influence of "Aunt Adelaide" on Mahan's life was profound. From the perspective of the late 20th century, viewed within the standards of the Victorian society she was raised in, Adelaide Mahan was a most remarkable woman. Valuing her independence, she chose not to marry. She made the choice knowing that society considered dependence and marriage the ideal, and only, life-style suitable for women. Prior to the turn-of-the-century she went to New York city alone and spent two years studying art at Cooper Union.

She also taught school and was an avid historian, with a keen interest in travel and archaeology. In 1905 she made the first of several visits to her brother Jesse in Honduras. On one of those visits she learned that the banana company was building a railroad in the nearby jungle with the tracks, at that moment going through a Mayan mound. She made several trips into the jungle to collect pottery from the site that had been destroyed. The collection was primarily large fragments of effigy vessels, whistles, and oil lamps. Sometime between 1905 and 1908 that collection disappeared while it was on loan for exhibition at a local school. Adelaide returned to Honduras in 1908 and gathered another smaller collection from the same site. Most of this collection remained intact and is now part of the Archaeological Collection curated at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. In addition to these activities Adelaide Mahan ran the small family farm, with the help of a tenant farmer, and raised bees. For most of the years that Edward lived with his aunt, and continuing until the mid-1950's, the chief income for the farm was from the honey production.

Mahan greatly benefited from his life on the farm with his aunt, in fact, his health was dependent on it. His illness was diagnosed as tuberculosis and the symptoms continued to come and go throughout his life. The care for T.B. during this period consisted of fresh air, and "to bathe the lungs in fat" which required consuming large quantities of eggs, butter, and milk all of which was certainly abundant on the farm. Edward was only allowed limited contact with other children for fear that he would infect them. For this reason

he was educated at home for six years by his aunt. During this time he read a great deal and was introduced to George Catlin's work and life among the Indians and was exposed to the Mayan artifacts his aunt had collected. In addition, Edward also took part in artifact collecting forays along Mahan creek. Given the primary influence of Aunt Adelaide on Edward beginning at age five and continuing through his formative years, it is not difficult to understand his lifelong interest in history and nature.

As Mahan matured he indulged his desire to explore and traveled around the country several times working at various jobs. He left home in 1926 when he was fifteen years old to work for an evangelist preacher. Edward looked after the preacher's tent but was paid very little. He traveled with that job to North Carolina where his health began to fail him at which time he was committed to a sanitarium by the County Health Department. He remained at the sanitarium until he was 17 years old. When he was released no funds were available to him so that he could return home. Fortunately, a social club in High Point, North Carolina raised enough money to purchase Edward's ticket back to Birmingham. Upon his arrival he hemorrhaged again and after a short stay in Birmingham he returned to his aunt's farm in Brierfield. After Mahan recuperated, he worked on the remodeling project of the General Gorgas Home and returned to high school. He was to graduate in 1932 but lacked half a credit so he was unable to graduate. His need to travel struck once again and with only twenty-four dollars in his pocket he hitch-hiked to Chicago to see the World's Fair. He became ill again after neglecting his health but did manage to see the Max Baer and Max Schelling heavy weight championship fight. After his recovery he started catching rides again, this time ending up in St. Louis and from St. Louis he continued heading West. He worked through the harvest in Kansas then Nebraska.

Throughout this excursion Mahan made many friends. People he worked for would call ahead to other farms so that Edward was kept in work. Eventually he arrived in Northern California with twelve dollars in his pocket. His first job in California, close to Marysville, was picking

prunes, then gathering pears. He enjoyed California and wanted to stay for some time and so he traveled to the Napa Valley area where among other jobs he helped harvest and crush grapes.

While in California Edward applied for a job in the government service as a rivet passer. He was hired but became unhappy with the work and managed to get rehired as a carpenter's helper. Unfortunately, Mahan's health began to fail him again and so he was transferred to Mare Island Navy Yard at Coronado in Southern California. It was at this time that he renewed his interest in archaeology. He met a woman twenty years his senior who was also interested in archaeology and knew the desert cultures. Together they would go to Tijuana, Mexico, to visit sites in the desert, bluffs, and canyons. His health problems revisited him once again and he became seriously ill causing him to take a year's leave of absence from his job at Coronado. During that period Edward married his first wife, Ruth Irene Carrol. They moved back to Alabama and Edward built a house for them at Brierfield. His wife was unhappy and eventually they divorced. They had one daughter, Judy Carmen Mahan, born to them in 1945.

In 1949 Mahan joined the Birmingham Anthropological Society where he met Daniel W. Josselyn. Josselyn was an avocational archaeologist by trade though he was a technical writer. Due to a motorcycle accident Josselyn was required, by his doctors, to participate in a walking program which he advantageously patterned so that he could search for Indian sites along Shades Creek. Josselyn knew little if anything about archaeology when he began doing this but he located sites on maps nonetheless so that he could keep his artifacts separated by sites.

Josselyn's interest in archaeology led him to begin reading in archaeology seriously and in time to give numerous talks at Society meetings. This influenced other members to begin systematic surface collecting and to attempt to classify their artifacts. Mahan was also among those who was influenced. In fact, it was Josselyn who trained him in locating sites and marking them on a topographical map at a time when there was not a state register. Josselyn did this not only for Mahan but for many others as well. He even helped

them write up their findings for publication. Those interested can find Mahan's articles in the Tennessee Archaeologist and the Journal of Alabama Archaeology.

In 1951, Mahan was hired by Redstone Arsenal and moved to Huntsville. Josselyn directed Mahan to be on the look-out for early man sites in the Tennessee Valley area because Clovis points were being found there. Mahan relates, in an oral history collected by UAB's Anthropology Lab director, Caryn Hollingsworth, "that he began collecting collectors". For over fifteen years he traveled from collector to collector examining their artifacts and locating the sites where the materials had been found. By this process Edward succeeded in conducting the first large scale surface survey of the greater part of North Alabama.

In 1953 Mahan met Dr. Frank Soday and James Cambron who together would organize the Decatur Archaeological Society. Dr. Soday became the first president, Mahan the vice-president and Cambron the second-vice president. Because Mahan lived in Huntsville he felt the area needed a chapter and so assisted with its development and also became its first president. In addition Mahan helped organize the Alabama Ornithological Society.

Another of Mahan's acquaintances was Jake Gurly whom he also met in the early 50's. Gurley, as most are aware, was a cave explorer and professional photographer for the army, most especially he is recognized as the discoverer of "Bat Cave". Gurly was so impressed by the grandeur and beauty of this cave that he felt compelled to purchase it and to rename it Cathedral Caverns. He moved there and invited Mahan to do the same. Mahan accepted his offer and for approximately four years conducted a test pit which, he reported, was the size of two football fields. He had been hopeful that fluted points would be found but instead he recovered only pottery sherds from the enormous midden.

While Mahan was at Cathedral Caverns, Redstone soldiers were cave exploring a few miles away at Guffey Cave. At approximately 1500 feet back from the entrance they encountered a travertine floor (the solidified limestone drippings from the roof of the cave). This had made a

sheet on the cave's floor several inches deep. The soldiers noticed that the travertine had flowed over what appeared to be bumps in one area of the floor. Out of curiosity one of the men kicked a bump revealing that the travertine had encrusted a large bone. Knowing this find was important the soldiers got in touch with Mahan at Cathedral Caverns. Because Edward was not aware of what the bone might be they made another expedition into the cave to collect more samples. After five hours of collecting, under horrendous conditions, they retrieved several hundred pounds of travertine, each piece containing one or two bones. The bones were sent to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington who in turn sent Mahan a report which indicated the find belonged to an extinct species of bear known as *Optutus* which had lived approximately 30,000 years ago.

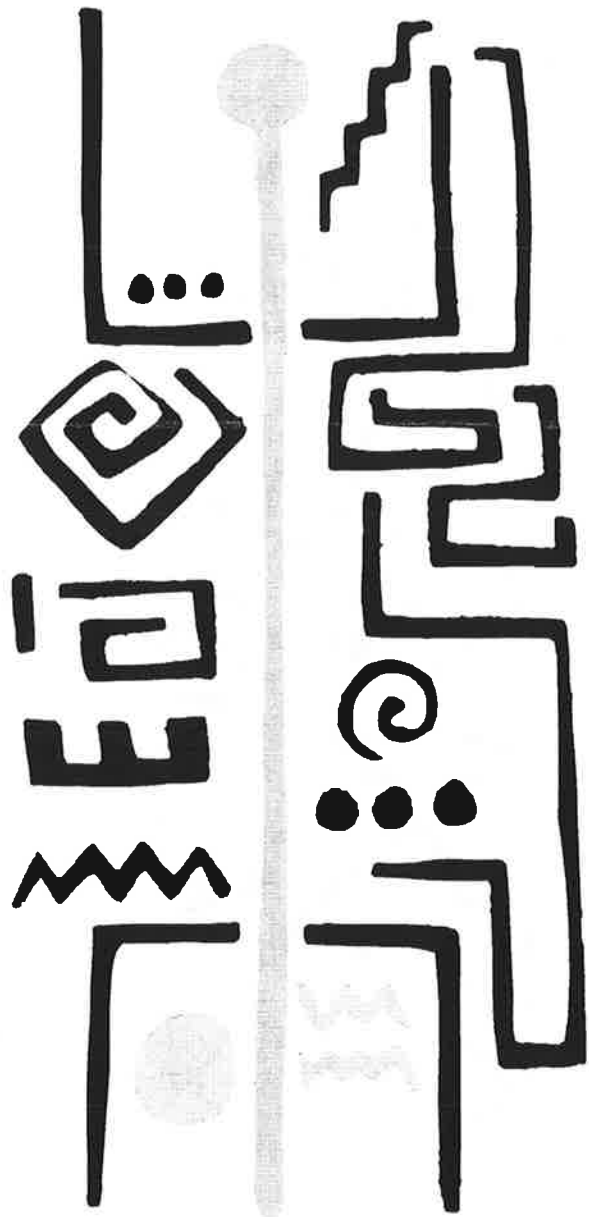
During this same period Mahan became friends with Dr. A.G. Long, an optometrist in Guntersville who shared Mahan's interest in archaeology. Together, Mahan and Dr. Long, at the request of David DeJarnette, conducted a large scale archaeological survey in the Sand Mountain area in search of bluff shelters. DeJarnette instructed them to dig only one test pit in each shelter they found. The men were instructed to probe to a depth of five feet in each pit. However, if they encountered a shallow midden they were only to give it a site number and mark it on a map. Materials recovered were to be sent to the University of Alabama. To that end the two men together accomplished the digging of thirty test pits in as many bluff shelters as well as having recorded approximately one hundred bluff shelters on the map. Eventually their work was phased out which coincided with the deterioration of Mahan's health.

After over forty years with a lung condition thought to be tuberculosis it was discovered that Mahan had multiple cysts on the right lung. The lung was removed in 1952. In 1961 he suffered a stroke and in 1979 required by-pass surgery to save his life. In light of such devastating illness Mahan's accomplishments are truly remarkable. His contributions to the state, as an amateur archaeologist, have been great. In 1981 Mahan donated his sizable artifact collection, field

maps, and most of his notes to the Archaeology Lab at UAB.

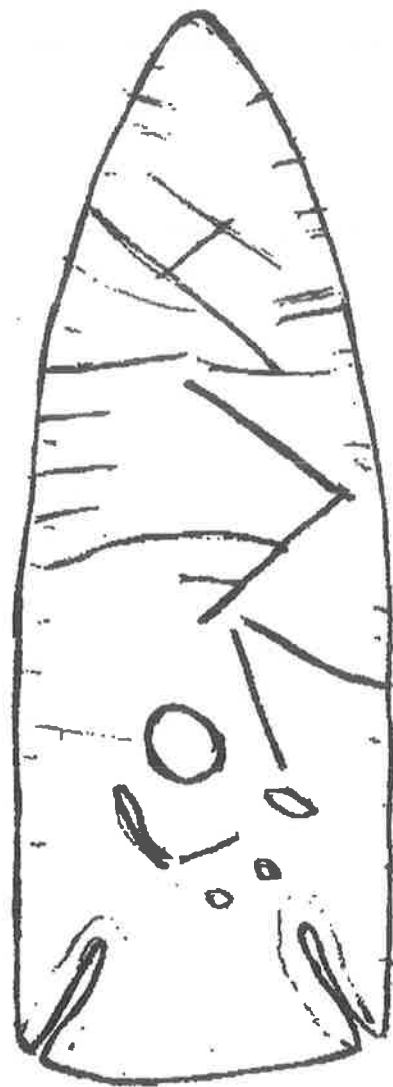
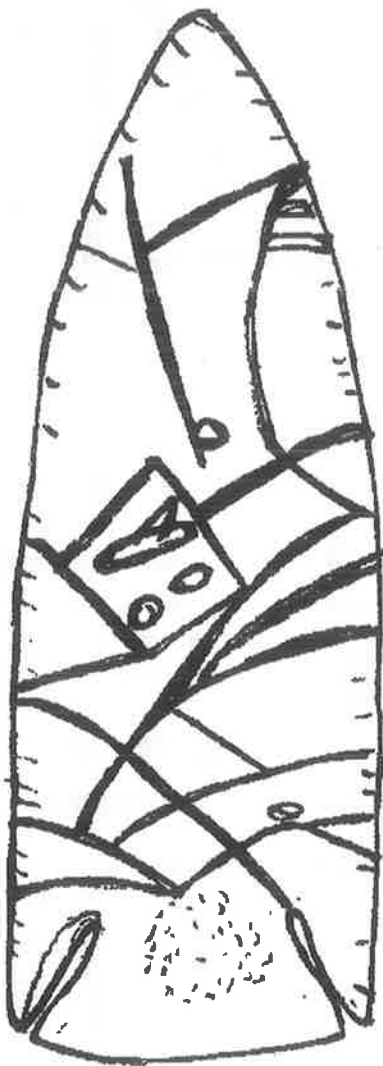
Unfortunately, most of the sites Edward located have been destroyed by cultivation, construction, and urban expansion. The only record of most of these sites is in the survey data in the Mahan collection. Fortunately, we have the legacy of his observations and his lifetime collection of artifacts.

(Presented by Dena' Colvin-Hand at the 1996 AAS Winter Meeting)



Mysterious Finds

Herman Stringer of Vinemont, Alabama, recently wrote the Alabama Historical Commision requesting information about the artifact below. Mr. Stringer stated that the artifact may be made of greenstone or possibly baked clay. It is brown in color and has a design on both sides. If you know what this artifact is or have seen one like it, please let us know.



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