

Alabama Archaeological Society

NADB DOC # - 4,056,980

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STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

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2602 Green Mountain Rd.
Huntsville, Alabama 35803

MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

Volume 30

Number 7

SUMMER MEETING

We would like to congratulate Dr. Charles Ochs, Program Chairman of the A.A.S. Summer Meeting, for a fine program on Sunday, June 12. Those attending the meeting were privileged to hear two lectures on Egypt, which tied into the exhibit "Through Ancient Eyes" currently on display at the Birmingham Museum of Art. Attendees then toured the exhibit itself - a display of Egyptian artifacts on loan from various museums and private collections. Our thanks to Dr. Ochs and the Birmingham Chapter for a most interesting and informative afternoon.

The Editors

ESAF ANNUAL MEETING

The 1988 Eastern States Archeological Federation (ESAF) annual meeting will be held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, November 4, 5 and 6, 1988, at the Westbury Hotel, 475 Yonge Street. Reservation forms and a preliminary program will be mailed directly to all individual members of ESAF in late summer. Nonmembers may request the same information directly from ESAF, P.O. Box 386; Bethel, Connecticut 06751 prior to August 15, 1988.

GRAVES DESECRATED

Some 1,000 Indian graves, dating back as far as the 15th century, were desecrated by artifact hunters who leased a site on a Union County, Kentucky, farm. To help assess the damage, said to be one of the nation's worst grave desecrations, the National Trust's southern regional office has awarded a \$1,300 Preservation Services Fund grant to the Kentucky Heritage Council. The council completed an archaeological investigation last month to map the 400 holes dug by the men who leased the land, known as the Slack Farm Site.

National publicity about the graves prompted the state legislature to pass two bills increasing penalties for grave robbing and exploring state archaeological sites without a permit. The gravesite area, also once an Indian village, is especially valuable as a source of information about aboriginal settlement of the Ohio

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Valley during the period of first contact between this native population and the "Euroamerican" explorers and settlers. The site was first searched by the Smithsonian Institution in 1868 and was known to contain such artifacts as tomahawks and medicine pipes. American Indian Movement members are performing a purification ritual there every four days until a reburial ceremony on Memorial Day.

(From "Preservation News", publication of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; May 1988)

CHAPTER NEWS

Muscle Shoals Chapter

The Muscle Shoals Chapter held its March meeting on the 14th at the Indian Mound Museum in Florence. Charles Hubbert of Huntsville was the speaker for the evening. His subject was Paleo and Archaic Man. Charles discussed the origin of Paleo Man and his lifestyle, and then he bridged the gap over to Archaic Man. Fourteen members and guests attended.

The April meeting took place on the 11th, when Charles Moore gave a report on the Spiro Mound Complex. The Moores had recently visited Spiro, and Charles told of the visit and showed slides that had been taken from books and brochures of Spiro. Twelve members and guests attended.

Doug Puckett of Sheffield was the speaker for the May meeting. Doug's subject was the Mississippian Cultural Period. He explained Indian life during that period and discussed some of the symbols and motifs of the period and their significance. Fifteen members and guests attended.

Carey Oakley presented the program at the June meeting. The meeting followed a picnic supper on top of the Indian Mound in Florence on June 13.

Charles Moore

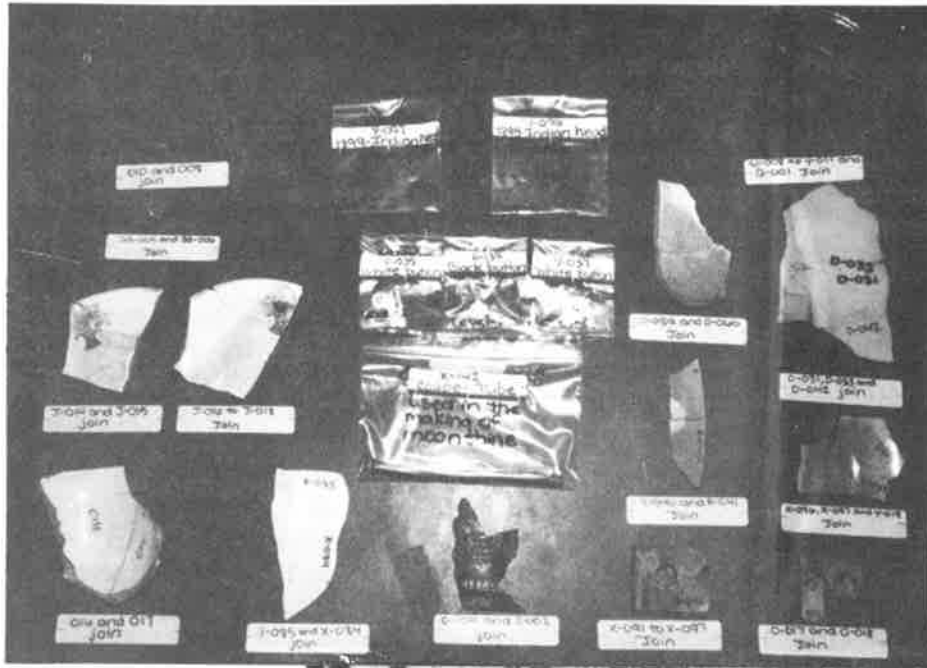
Huntsville Chapter

Chapter member Houston Wright was the speaker at the June 28 meeting. Houston's topic was "Recent Archaeological Discoveries in the Paleolithic". The next chapter meeting will be July 26, at which time Tim Mistovich of OAR will talk about a recently excavated French Colonial site in Mobile.

The Huntsville Chapter meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Auditorium of the new Public Library on St. Clair Avenue. The public is welcome.

Dorothy Luke

Kim Tinkham, a member of the Alabama Archaeological Society and the Huntsville Chapter, won several awards recently for an archaeological project. Kim excavated an old homesite (pre-1900) on her family's property in Toney. The property had been converted into a moonshine still before it burned down in the late 1960's. She won 1st place at the Alabama State Science Fair in the Humanities and Behavioral Science Division; 1st place in the North Region Alabama Junior Academy of Science Scientific Paper Competition in Humanities; and a special award from Sigma Xi for scientific research. Kim plans to continue working on her project over the summer.



1988 SUMMER DIGS

Invitations have been extended by sponsors to members and/or chapters of Alabama Archaeological Society to participate in the activities included below. Chapters, individuals or groups desiring to participate should contact directly the parties indicated below to receive detailed instructions and make necessary arrangements. Board of Directors of AAS set up above in lieu of statewide summer dig for 1988.

Fusihatchee — AUM Field School

June 14 - Aug. 18, 1988

Fusihatchee archaeological site on Tallapoosa River, 12 miles from Montgomery, Alabama. 17th century village to be excavated and will include surveying, excavation, photography, artifact analysis and lectures on local culture and prehistory. Also trips to nearby archaeological excavations.

Schedule -- Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Instructors -- Dr. Craig T. Sheldon, Jr., Associate Professor of Anthropology
Dr. John W. Cottier, Associate Professor of Anthropology

For Additional Information -- Contact Dr. Craig T. Sheldon, Department of Sociology, Auburn University at Montgomery, Montgomery, AL 36193, (205) 271-9378, or Dr. John W. Cottier, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Auburn University, Alabama 36849, (205) 826-5049.

Cathedral Caverns -- Jacksonville University Field School

June 12 - July 12, 1988

Cathedral Caverns Archaeological site, near Grant, between Guntersville and Scottsboro. Excavation and analysis within this important feature.

Dr. Harry Holstein, Jacksonville State University, is in charge. Contact him at Jacksonville State University or his home in Jacksonville. Best to call his home at night and leave your name, message and phone number so he can return call, (205) 435-1940. JSU number is (205) 231-5781.

Smith Bottoms Cave Excavation

Smith Bottom Cave is located on TVA property near Florence, Alabama. Early excavation and expectations are high that this will result in a very significant early periods location.

Mr. Carey B. Oakley, Office of Archaeological Research, at Moundville, is in charge. Telephone (205) 371-2266 is his office phone. Please leave your name, number and message if he is out.

1755 Riviera Drive
Merritt Island, FL 32952
22 May 1988

Dear Amos,

Earlier this year, I participated for seven weeks in an archaeological project at Caracol, Belize. This project is under the direction of Drs. Arlen and Diane Chase, a husband and wife archaeological team from the University of Central Florida. Previously, I had dug at Colha, Belize (1983), Copan, Honduras (1984), Tikal and Rio Azul, Guatemala (1985) and Rio Azul (1986 & 1987), and this year's dig at Caracol provided me with yet another glimpse of the ancient, fascinating world of the Maya.

Caracol, which was at its apex during the Classic Period (A.D. 250 to 900), is a remote jungle site situated in the Maya Mountains in southwest Belize, not far from the Guatemalan border. Although one of the largest Maya sites, it remained unknown to archaeologists until 1938, and very little work was done there until the Chases began the present project in 1985. From the project's excellent archaeological work, a picture of Caracol is emerging that literally staggers the imagination.

Long, well constructed causeways lead outward for several kilometers in all directions from the central part of the site. At the hub, and along the causeways, are numerous plazas surrounded by structures, some of very large size. Many tombs, crypts, stelae, and altars, some with important hieroglyphic texts, attest to the high level of cultural development of Caracol. Of considerable importance is the fact that Caracol's history bridges the gap between the Early and Late Classic Periods. Hieroglyphic texts show that in A.D. 562, Caracol conquered the powerful city-state of Tikal, and in A.D. 631, Naranjo was also defeated.

Like most other Maya sites, Caracol in recent years has suffered much at the hands of looters. However, thanks largely to the efforts of the Chases, the site is now protected by year-round patrols.

In going to Caracol, our vehicles became helplessly mired down, and we had to walk for more than five hours along the muddy jungle "road", up and down the mountainous terrain, carrying heavy loads. The camp, which was located in an ancient Maya plaza, consisted of several well constructed, rustic buildings, most of them thatched. Drinking water was obtained from runoff from the roof of a laboratory building, and water for other purposes was obtained from a small, thousand-year-old Maya-built aguada.

Sunlight falling on solar voltaic collectors provided electrical power for lights, radio, battery charging, etc. As I had done the previous two years at Rio Azul, I took with me into the jungle a small amateur radio transceiver, which provided reliable communications back to the U.S.


The mountainous nature of the site, and its extremely large size, meant that each day's work involved a long, arduous trek through the jungle, along the ancient causeways. There were many scorpions, biting insects, and snakes. The jungle was filled with countless birds and animals, and huge jaguar prints were often seen. The work was sometimes quite hard, and the camp life was rather primitive; however, the excavations were exciting, and many interesting things were found. As the project continues, Caracol will undoubtedly receive more and more recognition as a Maya site of great importance.

Please give my regards to my many friends in the Alabama Archaeological Society.

Mr. Amos J. Wright, Editor of Stones & Bones
2602 Green Mountain Road
Huntsville, AL 35893

STONES & BONES

Sincerely,


James S. Farrior

July 1988

STONE AGERS IN THE FAST LANE: CHRONIC DEGENERATIVE DISEASES IN EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

From a genetic standpoint, humans living today are Stone Age hunter-gatherers displaced through time to a world that differs from that for which our genetic constitution was selected. Unlike evolutionary maladaptation, our current discordance has little effect on reproductive success; rather it acts as a potent promoter of chronic illnesses: atherosclerosis, essential hypertension, many cancers, diabetes mellitus, and obesity among others. These diseases are the results of interaction between genetically controlled biochemical processes and a myriad of biocultural influences - lifestyle factors - that include nutrition, exercise, and exposure to noxious substances. Although our genes have hardly changed, our culture has been transformed almost beyond recognition during the past 10,000 years, especially since the Industrial Revolution. There is increasing evidence that the resulting mismatch fosters "diseases of civilization" that together cause 75 percent of all deaths in Western nations, but that are rare among persons whose lifeways reflect those of our preagricultural ancestors.

Late Paleolithic, Contemporary American, and Currently Recommended Dietary Composition

| | Late Paleolithic <u>Diet</u> | Contemporary American <u>Diet</u> | <u>Current Recommendations</u> |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Total dietary energy (percent) | | | |
| Protein | 33 | 12 | 12 |
| Carbohydrate | 46 | 46 | 58 |
| Fat | 21 | 42 | 30 |
| Alcohol | ~0 | (7-10) | - |
| P:S ratio | 1.41 | 0.44 | 1.00 |
| Cholesterol (mg) | 520 | 300-500 | 300 |
| Fiber (g) | 100-150 | 19.7 | 30-60 |
| Sodium (mg) | 690 | 2,300-6,900 | 1,100-3,300 |
| Calcium (mg) | 1,500-2,000 | 740 | 800-1,600 |
| Ascorbic acid | 440 | 87.7 | 60 |

(From an article by S. Boyd Eaton, M.D. et al in "The American Journal of Medicine"; Volume 84, April 1988)

EARLY IRON SMELTING IN CENTRAL AFRICA

In the early 1950's people of the Bahunde tribe in southern Zaire made a curious find while digging for sand not far from their village. What they found was a group of clay objects resembling rough bricks, many of them

decorated with circular or linear impressions. Two investigators from the Institute for Scientific Research in Central Africa, Jean Hiernaux and Emma Maquet, were called in to examine the serendipitously uncovered material. Their excavation showed that the bricks had formed part of a tall furnace for the smelting of iron. When the Bahunde people were confronted with that interpretation, they could see no connection between such furnaces and their own culture. They were inclined to believe the furnaces had been built by people with a more sophisticated iron-smelting technique than their own.

The Bahunde were right. Discoveries in the past decade indicate that the tall furnaces represent a remarkable Early Iron Age technology that was widespread in the interlacustrine region of central Africa (which includes eastern Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi, northern Tanzania, southwestern Kenya and Uganda). Employing only simple materials, the Iron Age smelters were able to generate temperatures as high as 1,400 degrees Celsius, providing an efficient means of obtaining iron from its ore. The smelting technology was not only efficient but also long-lived: it appeared in the interlacustrine region sometime during the first millennium B.C. and persisted in many areas until the beginning of the 20th century.

(From an article by Francis Van Noten et al in "Scientific American"; June 1988)

'AIN GHAZAL: A MAJOR NEOLITHIC SETTLEMENT IN CENTRAL JORDAN

"Ain Ghazal, an archaeological site located on the outskirts of Amman, Jordan, is one of the largest early villages known in the Near East. The site dates to the Neolithic period, during which mankind made one of its most significant advances, the adoption of domestic plants and animals as primary subsistence sources. Recent excavations at 'Ain Ghazal have augmented considerably current knowledge of several aspects of the Neolithic. Of particular interest has been the documentation of a continuous, or near continuous, occupation from early through late Neolithic components, and a concomitant dramatic economic shift. This shift was from a broad subsistence base relying on a variety of both wild and domestic plants and animals, to an economic strategy reflecting an apparent emphasis on pastoralism.

(From an article by Alan H. Simmons et al in "Science"; Volume 240, April 1, 1988)

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

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 1 Mound State Monument, Moundville, Alabama 35474

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