

Alabama Archaeological Society

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STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

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MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

THE FLOW ZONE

The following extract is taken from an article titled "Flow Zone Archaeology on College Creek (James City County, Virginia)" by Theodore R. Reinhart of William and Mary College. We feel it illustrates an area often neglected by archaeologists - the plow zone. This neglect is usually justified on the basis that time and resources do not permit systematic excavation of this zone - and besides it has little or no archaeological significance. This may be a shortsighted approach, as the author says "The methodology for the excavation and analysis of plow zone sites is still largely undeveloped. Its development seemingly awaits a greater interest in the recovery of this type of data. In the future, as the number of undisturbed sites diminishes in our crowded world, it is certain that this interest will grow.

Beginning in September 1976 and continuing through April 1977, the author and his students conducted excavations at an archaeological site at the mouth of College Creek in James City County. In the past several years we have investigated a number of archaeological sites which have been disturbed by plowing. It is our contention that these sites should be investigated as thoroughly as possible, particularly when, as in the Tidewater Virginia area, they represent the great majority of prehistoric archaeological sites. Instead of pushing the plow zone aside and then excavating features below it, the plow zone itself should be considered an integral part of the site and treated as an excavation unit. As a result, its analysis could contribute significant data. For example, although vertical relationships are destroyed within the plow zone, horizontal relationships have not necessarily been lost.

The excavations at the College Creek Site are an example of plow zone archaeology. Except for a small historic component, all archaeological data recovered and described in this report were from the disturbed plow zone; no features were found below some 82 square meters of excavated site surface. Removal of the plow zone from this site in search of the features below it most probably would have destroyed the site completely! Although we cannot be totally certain about this, as the plow zone was not completely removed, it is certainly the case in the areas of our excavation; and it is probably true for the whole site.

December 1978

The destruction of vertical stratigraphy through plowing results in the loss of features, the in situ ordering of artifacts, and much of the context of archaeological materials. If a site is a single component site; i. e., if the site represents only a single, short-time occupation, the diagnostic artifacts are temporal referents for dating the occupation and undiagnostic artifacts. We would still, of course, lament the loss of features and stratigraphic context, but the analysis of the artifacts could give significant cultural data. The situation becomes complicated if the site is multi-component; i. e., if the site represents several occupations at different times in the past.

This study makes no claim to have exhausted the potential of the plow zone data from the College Creek Site to answer historical and/or processual questions about Tidewater Virginia prehistory. The statistical approach used was very simple and can be done on a pocket calculator. Nevertheless, the study has contributed, albeit modestly, to our understanding of that prehistory. All this from data that are often pushed aside in search of what is sometimes not there and sometimes very limiting when it is.

(From Quarterly Bulletin, Archaeological Society of Virginia; June 1970)

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AT WINTER ANNUAL MEETING

The affairs of the Society are managed by a Board of Directors comprised of Officers elected annually for one (1) year terms and Directors-at-Large elected for three (3) year terms - one third elected annually. The number of Directors-at-Large is determined by the Society membership; with one Director for each 35 members, and is adjusted each year if necessary to reflect the proper ratio. Additionally, the president of each chapter and the immediate past president of the Society (year following his/her presidency) are constitutional members of the Board; i. e., not elected by the Society membership.

The Constitution and/or By-Laws provides that all members of the Board must be members in good standing and 21 years of age. "Good standing" implies, among other things, that membership dues are paid.

Society By-Laws provide that members who have not paid their dues by March 31 of each year are dropped from the rolls; and this, of course, includes members elected to serve on the Board. Review and action by the Board in the summer of 1976 established that Board members who become inactive Society members for non-payment of dues permanently vacate their office on the Board. Although subsequent payment of dues may restore one to Society membership - as one may join the Society at any time - restoration to an office on the Board is not permitted.

The 1978 Nominating Committee, comprised of Mr. Britt Thompson of Birmingham, Mr. David Chase of Montgomery, and Mr. Bart Henson of Huntsville as Chairman, presents the following slate of nominees for Society offices for 1979. In accordance with Constitutional requirements, this slate is sent to all members prior to the Winter Annual Meeting, to be held this year in Montgomery on December 9. Election is by majority vote of members in attendance at the Annual Meeting.

SLATE OF 1979 NOMINEES FOR
OFFICERS OF THE ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
(1-YEAR TERM)

Office	Name	Address
President	Mr. Michael C. Wells	Birmingham
1st Vice President	Miss Dorothy F. Luke	Huntsville
2nd Vice President	Mr. Joe Watkins, Jr.	Birmingham
Secretary/Treasurer	Mrs. Bettye T. Henson	Huntsville
Assistant Treasurer	Mr. Rodger L. Schaefer	Decatur
Journal Editor	Mr. Eugene Futato	Moundville
Associate Editor, J.	Mrs. Folly Futato	Moundville
Associate Editor, J.	Mr. Ned Jenkins	Moundville
Associate Editor, J.	Dr. Christopher Feebles	Ann Arbor
Photographer	Mr. John Martz	Huntsville
Newsletter Editor	Mr. Amos J. Wright	Huntsville
Associate Editor, N.	Mr. B. Bart Henson	Huntsville
Associate Editor, N.	Miss Dorothy F. Luke	Huntsville
ESAF Representative	Mrs. Marjorie Gay	Standing Rock
ESAF Alternate Rep.	Mr. Robert Gay	Standing Rock
Rep. to Ala. Hist. Com.	1. Mr. Amos Wright	Huntsville
(2 nominees to send	2. Mr. Charles Moore	Florence
Governor)	3. Mr. Brittain Thompson	Birmingham

(3-YEAR TERM)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Mr. Steve Wimberly (3)	Birmingham
Mrs. Margaret Chase (3)	Montgomery
Mr. Thomas Hutto (3)	Birmingham
Mr. Howard King (3)	Cullman
Mrs. Drusilla McGowen*	Auburn
Mr. Truman Ryan (3)	Huntsville
Dr. Ralph Strength (3)	Auburn

*Mrs. McGowen will serve as Director in 1979 by virtue of being the immediate past President of the Society.

For information purposes, the following Directors are currently serving, will serve in 1979, and have the indicated years remaining on their terms.

Dr. John W. Cottier (2)	Auburn
Ms. Janice Gilliland (2)	Coker
Mr. Charles E. Moore (2)	Florence
Mr. Carey B. Oakley (2)	University
Dr. Albert Trowse (2)	Auburn
Mr. Joe Watkins, Jr. (2)	Birmingham
Mr. David Chase (1)	Montgomery
Mr. W. Warner Floyd (1)	Montgomery
Mr. Eugene Futato (1)	Moundville
Mr. Thomas Moebs (1)	Decatur
Mr. Brittain Thompson (1)	Birmingham
Mrs. Marjorie Gay (1)	Standing Rock

Bart Henson
Chairman
Nominating Committee

DUES PAYABLE

For the convenience of the Society membership, a folded envelope is enclosed with this copy of the newsletter for payment of 1979 Society dues. For the approximately 200 members who used this envelope this year for the payment of annual dues, your promptness saved the Society approximately \$50.

CHAPTER NEWS

Birmingham Chapter: The Chapter meets the first Thursday of each month at the Red Mountain Museum, 1425 22nd Street South. Call Tom Hutto for further information at 956-1695.

Cullman County: The November meeting of the Cullman Chapter was held on the 26th at the Cullman Museum. The program was an outstanding film "The Early Americans", one of the best films on archaeology. It shows the making of a Clovis point, hunting with an atlatl and bolas, and many other facets of early American Indian lifestyles. The December meeting will be a dinner meeting at Bonanza Steak House on December 13 at 7:00 p.m.

East Alabama Chapter: The Chapter meets on the second Wednesday of each month in Thach Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. For additional information contact Dr. Ralph Strength at 621-0484.

Huntsville Chapter: The speaker at the November meeting of the Huntsville Chapter was Dr. Gerald Grzyb of the Sociology Department at UAH. (Dr. Grzyb also teaches Cultural Anthropology at UAH.) His topic was "Evidence of Role Stratification in Past Societies, Especially the Hunter-Gatherer Societies". The next Chapter meeting will be Tuesday, December 19, at 7 p.m. in the Arts Council Conference Room at the north end of the Von Braun Civic Center. Mr. Harvie Jones, noted Huntsville architect and preservationist, will give a slide presentation on Constitution Hall and other Huntsville buildings of the period.

Montgomery Chapter: The Chapter will meet on Tuesday, December 5, in the Sociology Department Conference Room at AUM at 7:30 p.m. The program will be a film on the Great Plains Indians. After the film there will be a discussion on the annual Winter Meeting.

Muscle Shoals: The Chapter held its November meeting on the 13th at the Indian Mound Museum in Florence, with 32 members and guests in attendance. The "point of the month" studied was the Flint Creek, and Mr. James S. Farrior of Huntsville presented an excellent slide narration on Indian archaeological sites in Mexico. There will be a supper meeting on December 11, when Charles Hubbert will present a program on fish weirs.

MEETINGS

The 1979 Conference on Underwater Archaeology will be held in conjunction with the meeting of the Society for Historic Archaeology at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Nashville, January 2-5, 1979. For information on the Conference on Underwater Archaeology, contact Mr. Jesse McCrary, Jr.; State Capital; Tallahassee, FL 32304. Details of the meeting of the Society for Historic Archaeology may be obtained from Mr. George Fielder; Tennessee Historical Commission; 170 Second Avenue North; Nashville, Tennessee 37201.

PLEASE NOTE

Vol. XIX, No. 1 (June 1973) of the Journal of Alabama Archaeology is now out of print. This is Part 1 of the Weiss Reservoir report by Messrs. DeJarnette, Kurjack and Keel. Several other issues are in short supply. If you have been putting off ordering issues you need, don't miss out. A list of these available and an order blank were attached to your August 1978 STONES & BONES. Order today!

Eugene Futato
Journal Editor
Moundville

GETTING THE AXE

What gave the Neolithic period its name was the recognition that at that stage in human history a new kind of tool had emerged: a stone axe with a smooth or even polished surface. Many thousands of such axes have come to light all over the Old World at sites where excavated materials show that the people who used the axes were not nomadic hunters but were growing crops, tending animals and leading settled lives. The areas where the axes are found, however, are often devoid of the kinds of stone the axes are made of. A study of some 3,300 stone axes from Neolithic sites in Britain is now revealing, among other things, the remarkable lengths to which the island's early farmers went to get good stone and bring it home.

The study had its beginnings in the late 1920's, when an enthusiastic amateur archaeologist, Alexander Keiller, the heir to a marmalade fortune, excavated Windmill Hill, a major Neolithic site in Wiltshire, and unearthed large numbers of stone axes. Determined to learn more about the tools, Keiller turned for help to H. H. Thomas, the geologist who had traced the "blue" stones of Stonehenge to their quarry 140 miles away in Wales. Thomas began by removing thin sections suitable for petrological analysis from Keiller's axes, and what started as a private study developed over the next few years into a nationwide project. A succession of geologists analyzed stone axes from controlled excavations throughout Britain for decade after decade, until now, some 40 years after the work began, the petrological collection is representative of all parts of the country except Cumberland and Northumberland.

At a recent symposium convened at the University of Nottingham by the Council for British Archaeology it was noted that whereas British axes could be traced to 20 separate quarry areas, these sources of stone were not all equally popular. More than 900 axes, or 27 percent of those analyzed so far, are made of a hornstone available only from outcroppings close to Scafell Pike, a mountain in the Lake District of northwestern England that is the highest in the country. The next-largest group of axes, representing more than 9 percent of the total, are of a greenstone found only near Fenzance in Cornwall. A further 9 percent are of a stone found only at Graig Llwyd in northern Wales. None of the 17 other quarries provided stone for more than 2 percent of the collection.

The distribution of the axes from Cornwall and the Lake District is anomalous. Greenstone axes are common in western Cornwall, but even more of them have been found in Essex, some 300 miles to the northeast, and they are rather uncommon at coastal sites in between. Commenting on this point, one of the project's leaders, William A. Cummins of the University of Nottingham, believes the greenstone axes moved by sea from Lands End at the southwestern tip of Britain to the Thames estuary on the

eastern side of the island. As for the hornstone axes quarried near 3,210-foot Scafell Pike, they are found in the greatest number along the Humber River some 100 miles across the island; more than 50 percent of all the hornstone axes come from sites within a 70-mile radius of the mouth of the river. Here there seems to be no question of any movement by sea; such a voyage would have required a virtual circumnavigation of Britain. Discussing the question in *Current Archaeology*, one of the editors of the journal, Andrew Selkirk, speculatively visualizes Neolithic youths in Yorkshire, ready for initiation into adulthood, setting off overland for the Lake District on a ritual quest, determined to collect in the shadow of Scafell Pike stone for the axes symbolic of man's estate.

(From *Scientific American*, January 1978)

BOOKS ON GENEALOGY AND HISTORY

If you need books on genealogy and history - both new and rare - write to The Book Shelf; 3765 Hillsdale Drive, N. E.; Cleveland, Tennessee 37311 and ask to be placed on their mailing list.

ARTIFACTS SOUGHT FOR NEW MUSEUM

The staff of the new Mississippi River Museum, now under construction on Mud Island off the shore of downtown Memphis, has launched a "Great Mississippi River Treasure Hunt" for artifacts associated with the river. The \$32 million museum/park, scheduled to open in 1981, has been designed as a "unique recreational, educational, and cultural facility to put the mighty Mississippi River on display for America." A monorail system to carry visitors to the island from downtown Memphis is already under construction.

Sections of the 25,000 square feet of exhibit space in the museum will be devoted to the river's history, folklore, geography, biology, hydrology, and culture, including music associated with the river.

Historian Jan Clement has a "shopping list" of hundreds of artifacts desired. It includes life preservers, saloon-vintage paintings, Indian canoes, settlers' tools and toys, mirrors, lanterns, Civil War uniforms and a steamboat bell. Sources will be appropriately identified in the museum, Clement says.

The Mississippi River Museum is a branch of the Memphis Fink Palace Museum. Owners of artifacts are urged to write or call Ms. Jan Clement at the Memphis Fink Palace Museum; 3050 Central Avenue; Memphis, Tennessee 38111; phone 901-454-5609.

Mississippi River Museum Artifact List

Indians - Paleo Period, Archaic Period, Woodland Period, Mississippian Period.

SALINAS DE LOS CERROS

AN INTERIOR SALT SOURCE OF THE MAYA LOWLANDS

Although various publications since 1878 (Habel) have mentioned the Maya site of Salinas de los Nueve Cerros, no one had "explored it archaeologically" until 1975. At that time, Brian Dillon, Edgar Torres and Mark Johnson worked there for 3 weeks. While there, they discovered Stela 1, Monument 2, collected salt samples, ceramics and other artifacts. Upon their return in 1976, they discovered Stelae 2 and 3 and Monuments 3 through 7. "This year, Dillon is spending a full working season at the site." He is a doctoral candidate at the University of California at Berkeley, "funded by Fulbright and others".

Since this site apparently controlled the only source of inland salt in the interior of the southern Maya Lowlands, it is of special interest. The site is located on the south bank of Rio Chixoy. This "perennial brine stream drains the nearby Tortugas salt dome".

"According to Dillon, the ancient method of salt production at the site was by fire-evaporation of brine in very large (2 to 2.5 m. in diameter) ceramic vessels." The inhabitants placed them along the banks of the salt stream and "apparently used them for a considerable time". The identity of the early inhabitants of Nueve Cerros is not known. Possibly they were Chol or even Ixkil. However, research indicates that the Kekchi "who expanded north from the Verapaz Highlands after the conquest" manufactured salt here until a few decades ago.

Chambered tombs containing ceramics have been reported in stone structures at the site "as in Group A". These ceramics "seem to emphasize a link with the Fasion River and Central Peten." Stelae and other sculptured stones have been discovered in front of some of the structures. All, with one exception, are of red sandstone.

(From The Arkansas AMATEUR, September 1978)