NADB DOC # - 4,056,895

Alabama Archaeological Society

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Volume 31

MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

Number 10

A.A.S. WINTER MEETING TO BE HELD AT MOUNDVILLE Saturday, October 28, 1989

The Society will hold its winter meeting this year in conjunction with the Alabama State Museum's Fall Festival at Moundville and help the Museum celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of Mound State Monument. As such, our meeting agenda has been designed in conjunction with the Museum program. While the program differs from past winter meetings, and is scheduled earlier than usual, the Executive Board felt that A.A.S. members would wish to help celebrate Moundville's birthday.

A.A.S. WINTER MEETING AGENDA

8:30 a.m. - coffee bar, 111 Smith Hall (UA Campus)

9:00 a.m. - grand opening of the multimedia exhibition entitled "The Mounds Awaken: The Contributions of the Civilian Conservation Corps to Mound State Monument", lobby of Smith Hall

9:45 a.m. - general business meeting of the Alabama Archaeological Society, 205 Smith Hall

10:00 a.m. - welcome from Dr. Douglas Jones, Academic Vice President and Director, State Museum of Natural History, University of Alabama, 205 Smith Hall

10:15 a.m. - "Reflections on Moundville as a Public Attraction and as a Scholarly Resource", Dr. Douglas Jones, 205 Smith Hall

10:30 a.m. - "120 Years of Moundville Archaeology", Dr. Vincas Steponaitis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 205 Smith Hall

11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. - lunch break. (A.A.S. Board of Directors Meeting at Ms. Melissa's Cafe, Moundville.)

1:30-2:30 p.m. - open house at Moundville. Includes tours of research complex, museum and park, and live demonstrations of traditional craftmaking.

2:30 p.m. - welcome to Mound State Monument from Dr. Douglas Jones - Mound A, Mound State Monument

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2:45-3:30 p.m. - "The People and Culture of Prehistoric Moundville", Dr. Christopher Peebles, Indiana University - Mound A, Mound State Monument

3:30-5:00 p.m. - Fall Festival activities continue

5:00-10:00 p.m. - Alabama Archaeological Society barbeque - Conference Building, Mound State Monument

Note: Please remember to allow sufficient time for the drive from Tuscaloosa to Moundville (approximately 13 miles), and to wear comfortable shoes for the tour of Moundville and climb to the top of Mound A for the afternoon session.

Directions to Smith Hall: From I-59 in Tuscaloosa, go north on McFarland Avenue and left on University Blvd. This will take you right to the campus of The University of Alabama. Just <u>before</u> the square, turn right. Smith Hall is on the right, a few buildings down. Watch for a sign marked "Museum of Natural History"; the Museum is in Smith Hall.

CHAPTER NEWS

Cullman County Archaeological Society

The Cullman County Archaeological Society met on September 18 at the Cullman Courthouse.

Huntsville Chapter

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

Chapter member David Hathaway presented the September 26 program, a talk entitled "The Prehistory of New Mexico's Tularosa Basin". George Thurlow will be the speaker at the October meeting; his topic is Mayan ruins of Belize and Copan.

ANNISTON MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY FIELD TRIP

The Anniston Museum of Natural History is planning a program and field trip to visit four prehistoric and historic Indian sites in Calhoun County the weekend of October 13 and 14. There will be a presentation by Dr. Harry Holstein of Jacksonville State University on Friday the 13th at 7 p.m. in the Museum Auditorium. A field trip, led by Dr. Holstein and Dr. Philip Koerper of JSU, will be organized on Saturday the 14th and will leave the Museum at 8 a.m., returning about 5 p.m. Lectures, demonstrations and group activities will be led at each site. A small fee of \$5 per person will be chaged to help defray the cost of travel; payment prior to the program will guarantee your reservation. This program is cosponsored by the Alabama Humanities Foundation, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. For more information contact Deb Slaney at 237-6766.

1990 NOMINEES FOR OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS OF THE ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Director (3-year term)	A. Baker Dean, Jr.	Opelika
Director (3-year term)	Larry Oaks ·	Montgomery
Director (3-year term)	Craig Sheldon	Montgomery
Director (2-year term) (to replace Phillip Koe	rper) Jody Perroni	Huntsville

DEAD SEA SCROLLS SCANDAL

A scholarly scandal of high proportions is well under way concerning publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in the Qumran Caves of Israel in 1947. At that time the area was part of Jordan, and the government assigned custody and publication responsibility to a Roman Catholic priest - Roland de Vaux - and a team of seven selected by de Vaux, all very close colleagues. Since 1967 Israel has had governmental control but has left the team intact. It is believed that some 400 texts remain unpublished, but no one knows for sure. Eminent Biblical scholars around the world have become infuriated and frustrated by the "stonewalling" they get from these scholars. The team will not release any information, will not make the scrolls available to other scholars, and even refuses to answer correspondence or requests from other scholars. Four of the original team have died, and another is inactive, but these have "bequeathed" their scrolls to someone else - an unprecedented procedure in academic circles. It is not clear today who the scholars are, their position on the team, nor which texts are assigned to whom. The Israeli Government is of no help either, as inquiries to the Department of Antiquities receive only bland noncommittal replies. Speculation, which may be gaining credence, on the stonewalling is that the Vatican or Israel, or both, do not want the scrolls published due to their content, which could cause considerable consternation and confusion to members of both churches.

Some of the scrolls are very fragile and may have already deteriorated to the point that they cannot be seen or used by other scholars. Also, many scholars complain that they will be too old to ever study the scrolls — or dead. The team seems to be headed now by a Professor John Strugnell, who sums up the whole situation in a statement to the AP — "My problem is to get the scrolls published, not satisfy the vanities of particular scholars." Strugnell says the publication date is Year 2000 — some 53 years after their discovery.

(Extracted from Volume 15, Nos. 4 and 5, Bublical Archaeology Review)

COLLOQUIUM SERIES IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

October 19, 1989

John Rashford, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, College of Charleston, South Carolina, "Ethnobotany and Caribbean Folklore: Introduction to the Film <u>Gullah Tales</u>"

November 16, 1989

Tom Sever, Ph.D., NASA, Earth Resources Laboratory, NSTL Station, Mississippi, "Remote Sensing: Archaeology from Space"

January 25, 1990

Elizabeth Boone, Ph.D., Director, Pre-Columbian Studies, Dunbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C., "The Aztec Painted Books: Picture Writing, History and Divination in Ancient Mexico"

February 22, 1990

Elliot Skinner, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology, Columbia University, New York, New York, "Ethnography and the Riddle of Zimbabwe"

March 22, 1990

Joy Baklanoff, Ph.D., Ethnomusicologist, Alabama State Museum of Natural History, "Music, Movement and Miracles: Celebratory Elements in the Black Primitive Baptist Footwashing Ritual"

April 19, 1990

Sue Scott, Archaeologist, Alabama State Museum of Natural History, "More Human than Divine: Effigy Artifacts from the Ancient City of Teotihuacan, Mexico"

Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. at the Ferguson Theater; open to the public, no admission charge. For more information contact Sue Scott, Program Coordinator, in Tuscaloosa, at 348-7774.

A MIDDLE PALAEOLITHIC HUMAN HYOID BONE

The origin of human language, and in particular the question of whether or not Neanderthal man was capable of language/speech, is of major interest to anthropologists but remains an area of great controvery. Despite palaeoneurological evidence to the contrary, many researchers hold to the view that Neanderthals were incapable of language/speech, basing their arguments largely on studies of laryngeal/basicranial morphology. Studies, however, have been hampered by the absence of unambiguous fossil evidence. We now report the discovery of a well-preserved human hyoid bone from Middle Palaeolithic layers of Kebara Cave, Mount Carmel, Israel, dating from about 60,000 years BP. The bone is almost identical in size and shape to the hyoid of present-day populations, suggesting that there has been little or no change in the visceral skeleton (including the hyoid, middle ear ossicles, and inferentially the larynx) during the past 60,000 years of human evolution. We conclude that the morphological basis for human speech capability appears to have been fully developed during the Middle Palaeolithic.

(from an article by B. Arensburg et al in "Nature", Vol. 338, April 27, 1989)

EARLY NEOLITHIC ORGANIC REMAINS FROM NAHAL HEMAR CAVE

The excavations in a small, dark cave in Nahal Hemar, a wadi in the Judean Desert (Israel), exposed several Early Neolithic layers, rich in organic remains and ritual objects. The fragmentary perishables included asphalt-coated containers, mat remains, and twined and coiled baskets. Fine linen yarn was used to make various items, but most exquisite is a headdress. Among the wooden artifacts are red- and green-painted arrowheads and beads. The stable temperature and low humidity in the cave were also responsible for the

preservation of green-painted plaster beads, human skulls modeled with asphalt and plaster and painted green and red. Other finds include a rich collection of bone spatulas, numerous flint blades and a special flint knife, and marine shells. A series of radiocarbon dates indicate that the age of this collection, which may represent a cache for ritual gathering, is 9100 to 8300 years old.

(From an article by Ofer Bar-Yosef and Tamar Schick in "National Geographic Research", 1989)

NEW THREAT TO MAYA RUINS

Acid rain falling on the Yucatan Peninsula and much of southern Mexico is fast bringing destruction to the temples, colorful murals and haunting megaliths of the ancient Maya civilization, art historians and archaeologists say.

Evidence of widespread damage to the Maya ruins is the most telling example yet that acid rain, which can blight forests and lakes as well as damage stone structures, is not confined to the world's northern industrial regions.

Alarming amounts of acid rain were also reported earlier this year over central Africa, caused by pollutants from the burning of thousands of square miles of grasslands. The Maya fallout, by contrast, is attributed to pollutants from oil refineries and tourist buses.

The damage to Maya treasures is greatest, the experts say, in the temples of Palenque, where paint is flaking off by the handful and stucco surfaces and stone inscriptions are corroding and crumbling. A black crust of acid deposit coats one wall of the Great Ball Court at Chichen Itza. Archaeological treasures at Coba, Chicanna, Uxmal and other sites are also showing acid's devastating effects.

(From an article by John Noble Wilford in "The New York Times", August 8, 1989)

PUBLICATION AVAILABLE

GEORGIA'S INDIAN HERITAGE: The Prehistoric Peoples and Historic Tribes of Georgia - by Max E. White, Ph.D.

Intended for a general audience, this book represents a major contribution to the study of Georgia Indians and archaeology. The book contains some 130 pages, is hardbound, and is illustrated.

Available from Max E. White; P.O. Box 1163; Gainesville, GA 30501. Price per copy \$19.95 plus \$1.50 postage and handling.

AGE, DISTRIBUTION AND CULTURAL AFFILIATION OF RACCOON NOTCHED POINT VARIETIES IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA AND WESTERN NEW YORK - by Stanley W. Lantz.

Price: \$10.00. Send check to: Publications Secretary; Carnegie Museum of Natural History; 4400 Forbes Avenue; Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

RESCUE OF DAMAGED THUNDERBIRD PALEOINDIAN SITE UNDER WAY

Key portions of the Thunderbird Paleoindian archaeological site in Warren County, Virginia, may be protected from destruction thanks to public, corporate and government cooperation.

The Thunderbird site (44Wrll) is recognized nationally and internationally as one of the most important archaeological sites in the Eastern United States. It has been designated a National Historic Landmark (along with 44WR50) as the Thunderbird Archaeological District, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Flint Run Archaeological District.

Like other privately owned archaeological sites and historic structures, however, Thunderbird, sitting in the middle of a residential subdivision, is virtually unprotected regardless of significance. In mid March 1988, a five-acre lot on the Thunderbird site was cleared of timber and partially bull-dozed in preparation for building on the property. The clearing and grading out across a 300-foot section of the site hit the core of an ongoing research excavation.

Just two weeks before the site was damaged, the Archeological Society of Virginia (ASV), in honor of its 50th Anniversary, had formed a committee to study various options for preservation of Thunderbird.

The discovery of a whole complex of functionally different sites at the Thunderbird complex all fit into a total settlement pattern — jasper quarry site, lithic reduction stations, processing areas and the habitation site. Until then, prevailing opinion among those who worked in eastern Paleoindian studies was that these early populations were highly migratory, inhabiting no permanent settlement sites.

The ASV anticipates that somewhere around \$150,000 will be needed in order to purchase all five lots, a total of 26.52 acres. For further information, contact Dr. Gardner (Catholic University of America), at 703/459-4017; or Sandra Speiden, 703/672-2596. Those interested in helping to save Thunderbird may send their tax deductible donations to: Thunderbird Research Corporation, 126 East High Street; Woodstock, Virginia 22664. Please specify contributions as being for "site purchase".

PUBLICATION	SAVAILABLE	
Available issues of Journal of Alabama Archaeology Vol. 20-29 each issue		
Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations (Journal of Alabama Arc		
Special Publication 1 — Fort Mitchell		
	end, Dallas County Alabama	
Special Publication 3 — Archaeological Investigations at Horsesho		
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Alabama Archaeological Society

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