

Alabama Archaeological Society

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STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

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2602 Green Mountain Rd.
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MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

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1980 SUMMER MEETING

The Summer Meeting of the Alabama Archaeological Society will consist of two days' (July 19 and 20) participation in a field school being conducted at the site of Ft. Tombekbe, near Epes, Alabama. The field school, being conducted by the University of Alabama in cooperation with the University of Livingston, began work June 11. The project is expected to continue through the summer under the supervision of archaeologist Jim Parker. According to Mr. Parker, by the time of the Society meeting, there will be many sections open, much information gathered and plenty of work for our members to do: water screening, pottery washing, cataloging, etc. Three historic components of the fort are still intact. No work has been done on the site up to now; the land had not even been plowed.

Participants should bring their own tools - trowel, whisk broom, etc. Wear comfortable clothing and be sure to bring insect repellent as protection against chiggers (red bugs), which are plentiful in the area.

There is a clean, adequate motel in Livingston, about eight miles from Epes. Write Livingston Motel; Route One, Box 89; Livingston, Alabama 35469; or call (205) 652-9621. Rates are: 1 bed, 1 person: \$16.80; 1 bed, 2 persons: \$18.90; 2 beds, 2 persons: \$21.00. Additional persons: \$2.10 each. The motel is air conditioned and has individual telephones. There is a restaurant adjacent to the motel. (Other nearby towns, for those unable to secure accommodations in Livingston, include Demopolis, York, Demopolis, Eutaw and, of course, Tuscaloosa.)

There is also a campground available - free of charge but "primitive" in that there are no electrical hookups. There is water at the campground and toilet facilities. The only requirement is that you leave the area clean and pack out any garbage.

There are no fast-food establishments in Epes, so participants must provide their own lunches and beverages for the two-day dig. (There is potable water on the site.) There will be a barbeque with a guest speaker on Saturday night.

It is not necessary to be an A. A. S. member to participate in the dig - any interested person is welcome. There is a \$7 fee for the Saturday night barbeque. This fee covers the barbeque and expenses for the guest speaker. Pre-registration deadline is July 15 (those who wish to attend the Saturday night barbeque must pre-register). Mail checks (made payable to Alabama Archaeological Society) to A. A. S. Secretary/Treasurer Mrs. Bettye T. Henson; 7608 Teal Drive, S. W.; Huntsville, Alabama 35802. Registration packets will be distributed at the site.

July 1980

AGENDA

Saturday, July 19

- 8:30 a.m. Meet at the entrance to the University of Livingston, on U. S. Hwy 11 in Livingston. (We will assemble right inside the gate posts, just off the highway.) There will be a short briefing on the day's activities; information on the Board of Directors Meeting will be available at this time.
- 8:40 a.m. Proceed to the site.*
- Lunch On your own.
- Evening Barbeque in Livingston for those who have pre-registered. There will be ample time to clean up and change clothes.

Sunday, July 20

- 8:30 a.m. Meet at the entrance to the University of Livingston.
- 8:40 a.m. Proceed to the site.
- Lunch On your own.

*Those of you who do not leave home until Saturday morning may not be able to make it to the Livingston campus by 8:30 a.m. The following are directions to the site for those who will be arriving on their own. (The directions assume you are approaching the site from the north; adapt them depending on your starting point.) Take U. S. Highway 11 or Interstate 59 from Birmingham, heading southwest toward Eutaw. When you reach the Tombigbee River Bridge crossing, you are opposite Epes. (Epes is in Sumter County.) After crossing the bridge, take the first right. This will cross railroad tracks in the center of a small town. After crossing the railroad tracks, take the first right and follow the road - it leads direct to the site. As you get close to the site, the road becomes a dirt road. There is a very small sign reading Ft. Tombechbe as you arrive at the site, but the printing is worn and is almost obliterated. Park by the utility building.

Margaret Chase
Montgomery

FORT TOMBEKBE

Bienville as early as April 23, 1735, said he had decided to build a fort on the upper "Mobile" River some 70 leagues from Mobile. His letters of 1735 indicate he had a location in mind other than where the fort was built on the west bank of the Tombigbee River in Sumter County. It appears he was thinking of somewhere

in the forks of the Tombigbee and Black Warrior Rivers. But he later decided on its present location. On May 2, 1736 he wrote "The sentiment of the trustworthy Choctaws has made me abandon the idea of establishing a post at Tasca-loosa (Black Warrior), and in fact although that is a very fine place, this one which is fifteen leagues farther up has great advantages over the other. We are here situated between two roads that the English take to go to the Choctaws and one day's journey from the villages of this nation that are in the eastern part."

Bienville, after a trip upriver, wrote on June 26, 1736 that the fort was not yet complete. He had placed the construction in the hands of Capt. De Lusser but near completion he left Capt. Chevalier de Berthet in charge with 30 French soldiers and 20 Swiss soldiers.

Diron d'Artaquette, in a letter May 8, 1737 says the fort is completed and was built of red cedar - "the most lasting wood they have". The barracks and other buildings were also cedar. The other commanders must have been considered transitional, as Capt. Le Suer was appointed the first commandant in 1738.

Pepper to Gov. Lyttelton of South Carolina December 21, 1756 says the fort had only 15 men and a "few swivel guns and is but of small account and seems to be of little more use than a guard for the great store they kept there which they open monthly and distribute goods to the Choctaws in lieu of white people and Chickasaw scalps, which trade they practice as our traders do for Deer Skins".

When the French ceded the territory to the British, Major Farmer, the British commander at Mobile, says the fort was surrendered to Capt. (Lieutenant in another reference) Thomas Ford and 30 men from the 34th Regiment on November 22, 1763. Ford, in a letter November 24, 1763, gave a good description of the county, Indians and the French, which is too lengthy to print here.

James Adair, the famed trader and historian, describes how the French commander sneaked away with his troops in the dark of night due to his embarrassment of "deserting" the faithful Choctaws. Adair claims to have been present during this change of command.

Under the British it was known as Fort York and later, under the Spanish, as Fort Confederation. It was abandoned by the British in January 1768.

In following years it was little more than a location or trading post and was last used as the Choctaw trading factory under the Americans in early 1800.

The Editors

CHAPTER NEWS

Birmingham Chapter: The Chapter meets the second Thursday of each month at the Red Mountain Museum. Call Tom Hutto for more information at 956-1895.

East Alabama Chapter: This chapter meets the first Thursday of every month in Thach Auditorium, Auburn University, at 7:30. For more information, call Dru McGowen at 821-2595.

Huntsville Chapter: Huntsville Chapter librarian, Georgia Dunn, reported that the Chapter had acquired by donation a new book entitled Maritime Archaeology by Keith Muckelroy, and presented it to the Huntsville Public Library.

Ed Fulda, Archaeologist, presented in brief summary form the current status of the continuing excavations at Constitution Hall State Park. A tailor's shop and dentist office have now been located, and identified by their numerous associated artifacts. Excavations will continue each Saturday and Sunday throughout the summer. Volunteer workers are welcome.

Mr. Roy Cochran, Jr., archaeologist for the Arkansas Archaeological Survey, made a presentation on the Nodena Phase in northeast Arkansas, where he has been working extensively the past year. He reviewed for the chapter the history of the site area, and the exploration techniques from the past as contrasted with those of today. Numerous color slides illustrated the salient topics of the presentation. Sad to say, some of the slides showed the use of heavy machinery in use for the commercial "strip-mining" of sites, especially mounds, for artifacts. Severe pressure by commercial interests in Nodena pottery (late Mississippian period) has placed the archaeologists at a disadvantage in investigating many sites, and preserving or protecting sites is almost an impossibility.

Unfortunately, much of the Nodena artifactual material excavated as long ago as 30 to 40 years, especially pottery, and presently in the custody of various museums and academic institutions, has not yet been catalogued or photographed. This material is disappearing at an alarming rate by wholesale theft and loss of records. [Lack of funds and understaffing no doubt account for most of this type of "inventory shrinkage", but careless or lax inventory management by the custodial institutions both in and out of the state is suspected in some instances. Editors] Mr. Cochran and others of the Arkansas Archaeological Survey are to be commended for their continuing and effective efforts at investigating and salvaging data from the Nodena site(s), despite the often depressing obstacles.

Muscle Shoals Chapter: The Muscle Shoals Chapter held its June meeting on the 9th - a picnic supper on top of the Indian Mound in Florence. Thirty-one members and guests attended. After the picnic supper, Al Beinlich of Sheffield presented an interesting program entitled "Pebble Tools". Al also passed around examples of possible pebble tools for examination and study.

AMENDMENT TO ALABAMA'S 1915 ANTIQUITY ACT

The Governor has recently signed into law an amendment which will increase the fine for violation of Alabama's Antiquity Law from \$100 each offense to \$1,000 each offense.

Mack Brooms
Montgomery

ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Alabama Historical Commission will be held at the State Capital in Montgomery on July 25 and 26. Of special interest to the members of the Society is the Archaeological Workshop to be held on Saturday, the 26th. Mr. John Cottier, archaeologist with Auburn University, will kick off the workshop with a presentation of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, in the morning. Lunch will be at the Governor's Mansion. From 2:00 to 5:00, the program will center on historical archaeology (domestic), industrial archaeology, and commercial archaeology. Participants in the workshop will consist of commercial and industrial archaeologists and architectural historians. A reception at North Hull Street Historic District will follow at 7:00. The workshop will be interesting and informative to professional and amateurs alike. All Society members are encouraged to attend. You may register for one or both days. A cost advantage will be given for pre-registration and for attending both days. If you are not on the Alabama Historical Commission mailing list or do not receive registration information, please write Cathy Donelson at the Alabama Historical Commission; 725 Monroe Street; Montgomery, Alabama 36130.

Mack Brooms
Montgomery

NEW MELONES DAM PROJECT

This dam, located in California, was authorized in 1944 and completed in 1978. The 625-foot dam is the second highest earth-rock filled dam in the U. S. and cost \$346 million. Three federal agencies - National Park Service, Historic Preservation and Recreation Service and the Corps of Engineers - have been responsible at different times for establishing guidelines and carrying out the archaeological survey and work called for under present federal law. The above agencies "had not developed criteria to use in deciding the extent of mitigation efforts needed to satisfy the requirements of the archaeological laws. Therefore, pressured by special interest groups and archaeologists, federal agencies have funded numerous archaeological studies at New Melones Dam.

It appears that each agency shuttled the project around and consequently the left hand did not know what the right hand was going. The work done on the project in the early years lacked a great deal in quality and even seriousness: "The

initial 1948 Smithsonian Institute study demonstrates how lightly cultural resources were treated in the past. Archaeologists visited the New Melones site several days and located four cultural resource sites. The Smithsonian team recommended no further studies be carried out in the New Melones Reservoir area. Both the survey work and resulting report have been characterized as superficial and cursory with respect to present-day archaeology survey expectations. One criticism is that the report failed to identify the actual area surveyed, the intensity of the survey, or the methodology used." Between 1968 and 1976 the National Park Service funded seven projects with reports for two of these delayed two to three years. The Corps of Engineers has funded seven projects between 1975 and 1979.

After 30 years and 15 archaeological studies costing \$2.4 million, the Corps feels the work is still not adequate and plans to fund the full 1 percent, or \$3.46 million, for the project. Even without establishing guidance as to what adequate is, the Corps, in a defensive position, is funding the full 1 percent.

Source data and direct quotes for this article come from GAO Report CED-80-29, December 21, 1979. This appears to be another example of where the federal government needs to get its act together, define responsibility and make some decisions. Instead, they keep spending funds on one survey after another that leads nowhere.

The Editors

OLD PHOTOGRAPHS REQUESTED

"A Pictorial History of Huntsville and Madison County" is to be published this fall by The Donning Co./Publishers, a Virginia firm. This will be primarily a photographic history of the town and county, from Indians to the present. Anyone having photos that might be used in the book please contact Dave Dooling; Science Editor, Huntsville Times; P. O. Box 1487; Huntsville, Alabama 35807.

The Editors

JOURNALS FOR SALE

Long time member, Birney Work, has offered for sale a complete set of the "Journal of Alabama Archaeology" for the 20 years Vol. VI, No. 1, June 1960, to Vol. XXV, No. 2, December 1979. He prefers to handle this in sets of ten years at \$15 per set or \$25 for the entire collection. However, other arrangements would be considered by direct correspondence with: J. Birney Work; 2079 Cormorant Drive; Palm Harbor, Florida 33563.

The Editors

CONSTITUTION HALL UPDATE

The excavations at Constitution Hall resumed three weeks ago after a 10-week layoff due to poor weather and other causes. Thanks to the layoff, though, we were able to wash and catalog artifacts that had been sitting around since last year. The artifacts, along with field notes and assorted maps, allowed us to answer some questions that we had about the site. Unfortunately, many questions are still unanswered and new questions have been raised because of recent finds.

The mystery of the human teeth (over 700 so far) was solved with the help of a city map and a city business directory. Dr. William D. Allen was the resident dentist at the Neal Home from 1898 to 1906. However, we're not sure how much earlier or later he was there. Still, judging from the number of extracted teeth, his business must have been a profitable one.

Recently, we have uncovered evidence that a tailor's shop occupied the site before Dr. Allen moved in. Literally hundreds of buttons have turned up in the past few weeks. Also, several dozen pins and needles have been excavated along with three or four thimbles.

The ceramics sequence at the Neal Home has been tough to sort out due to mixing of occupational layers and the number of sherds that have turned up. Several thousand sherds have been looked at, and the most popular patterns have been the famous "Willow" and the "Blue Shell-Edge" patterns. The worst job thus far has been glueing sherds together (not unlike assembling a jigsaw puzzle that has missing pieces). The glueing has paid some dividends, however, as we were able to piece together most of a Willow pattern saucer that may date back to the first quarter of the 19th century. Most of the pottery appears to be English made, coming mainly from the Stratfordshire region. A totally unexpected find was the discovery of several pieces of gold-leaf porcelain. One of the Neal Home residents must have been well off financially.

Although the recently-excavated material dates wholly from the 19th century, the architectural features do not. This is a problem to explain in any way. Most of the exposed brick appears to be slave-made, but at least some of the brick is of 20th century manufacture. All of the brick (slave-made and modern) has been mortared together. To make matters worse, there is a gas line, a cast-iron sewer pipe and ceramic sewer pipes running under the brick. Also, part of a concrete foundation is now being exposed. It runs deeper than the brick. More digging may shed some light on this puzzle.

Digging will continue this summer along the same lines as it was carried out last year. We will work on the weekends from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The crew is made up of volunteer labor, so we will be glad to take on anyone with a desire to dig, to screen, or to wash artifacts. All we ask of our volunteers is that they bring whatever tools they may have.

Ed Fulda - Archaeologist
Huntsville

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Available issues of <i>Journal of Alabama Archaeology</i> Vol. 13-18	\$1.00 pp
Vol. 20-24 (\$2.50 to Members)	\$4.00 pp
<i>Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations</i> (Journal of Alabama Archaeology)	
Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint)	\$5.00 pp
Special Publication 1 — Fort Mitchell	\$2.00 pp
Special Publication 2 — <i>The Archaeological Sequence at</i>	
<i>Durant Bend, Dallas County, Alabama</i>	\$4.50 pp
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<i>Handbook of Alabama Archaeology Part I, Point Types</i>	\$7.35 pp
Lively, Long, Josselyn - <i>Pebble Tool Paper</i>	\$3.00 pp
<i>Investigations in Russell Cave</i> , published by the National Parks Service	\$5.00 pp

CHECKS SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO: **ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

MAIL CHECKS TO: **MR. EUGENE FUTATO, Office of Archaeological Research**
1 Mound State Monument, Moundville, Alabama 35474

MEMBERSHIP

The coupon below may be used EITHER to APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP in the Society, or for the PAYMENT OF ANNUAL DUES. Please be sure that your name and address are CLEARLY entered, and that appropriate boxes are checked.

TO: **THE ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, for**

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7608 Teal Drive, S.W.
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Alabama Archaeological Society

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