

Alabama Archaeological Society

Associate Editors
Bart Henson
Dorothy Luke



Editor
Amos J. Wright
2602 Green Mountain Rd.
Huntsville, Alabama 35803

Volume 29

MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

Number 12

A.A.S. WINTER MEETING

This year's winter meeting will be held at the Huntsville Hilton, 401 Williams Avenue, on Saturday, December 5. (The Hilton is located across from Big Spring Park and the Von Braun Civic Center in downtown Huntsville.) The Hilton is holding a block of rooms for Society members; advance reservations may be made at a reduced rate until November 15. Call the Hilton at 533-1400 for reservations.

For more information on the winter meeting, call Program Chairman Nancy Rohr at 883-1933.

A.A.S. PROGRAM FOR WINTER MEETING DECEMBER 5, 1987

- 9:00 Registration and Artifact Display
- 9:30 Welcoming Remarks - A.A.S. President, Mr. Carey B. Oakley
- 9:40 Dr. Harry Holstein - "The Hightower Site: an Early Spanish Contact Site in Eastern Alabama"
- 10:00 Mr. Eugene Futato - "An Update on the 1987 Field Season at Tell Halif, Israel"
- 10:20 Coffee Break
- 10:45 Dr. Douglas E. Jones - "Archaeological Implications of the De Soto Commission"
- 11:15 Dr. Boyce Driskell - "Microscopic Wear on Stone Tools: New Ways To Look at Old Stones"
- 11:45 Lunch - Board Meeting
- 1:10 Business Meeting and Election of Officers
- 1:30 Mr. Larry Oaks - "Statewide Survey Update"
- 2:00 Mr. Read Stowe - "Recent Archaeological Investigations"
- 2:20 Mr. Carey B. Oakley - "Smith Bottom Cave"

- 2:40 Coffee Break
- 3:00 Dr. Charles H. Faulkner - "Cave Archaeology in the Southeastern United States"
- 3:45 Closing Remarks and Adjournment
- 4:00 Cash Bar/Appetizers

CHAPTER NEWS

Coosa Valley Chapter

The Coosa Valley Chapter held its September meeting on the 24th at Brewer Hall on the Jacksonville State University campus. Twenty-eight members and guests were present for the initial meeting of the year. Dr. Phillip E. Koerper, Chapter President, presided over the business portion of the meeting and the 1987-88 chapter elections. Dr. Koerper was re-elected as President; Dr. Leon Willman, 1st Vice President; George Gerdes, 2nd Vice President; Brigitte Cole, Secretary; and Mary Johnson, Treasurer. The program of speakers for the year was announced, and plans for field trips were briefly discussed.

Dr. Harry O. Holstein, Jacksonville State University Archaeologist, presented a slide-lecture program on the 1987 University of Alabama - Jacksonville State joint excavation at the Hightower Site near Sylacauga. Dr. Holstein was one of the directors at the Hightower Village Site.

The Coosa Valley Chapter meets on the last Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at Brewer Hall, Jacksonville State University. The next program, October 29, will feature Mr. Eugene Futato, Office of Archaeological Research, who will speak on the Tel Halif Site in the Middle East.

Brigitte Cole

Cullman County Archaeological Society

The chapter met on October 19 at the County Courthouse. The program consisted of point and other artifact identification.

Howard King

Fayette Chapter

Mr. Bruce Bizzoco of Tuscaloosa presented a slide-illustrated program on the "Old Bank Site Dig" in Tuscaloosa. The history, structure, and artifacts were explained in this delightfully informative program.

Shirley Porter

Huntsville Chapter

The October 27, 1987 program was presented by Archaeologist Jody Perroni. Mrs. Perroni's slide-illustrated program was entitled "An Early Archaic Cemetery on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway". The site is in Itawamba County, near Fulton, Mississippi.

During her presentation Jody explained how the archaeological work on the Tennessee-Tombigbee began and how it was managed. Regarding this work, she provided some insight into the different points of view taken by academia and contract archaeologists. She also reviewed briefly some Texas Archaeological Society field school work, its organization and activities.

Jody is a graduate of Louisiana State University (Anthropology) and has done graduate work at both LSU and the University of Texas. For the past three years she worked for the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer in pre-history and historic archaeology. For the first six years after graduation, she worked in contract archaeology, traveling throughout the state examining sites and archaeologists' work. This eventually led her to the Itawamba County, Mississippi work. Her long-term interests are preservation law and public relations for preservation work.

Bart Henson

Muscle Shoals Chapter

The Muscle Shoals Chapter held its October meeting on the 12th at the Indian Mound Museum in Florence. Twenty-four members and guests attended the meeting.

Van King of Altoona presented an excellent program on flint knapping. After brief introductory comments, Van demonstrated the steps in making points and tools.

The next program will be on November 9, when Sue Ellisson will bring a program on Indian jewelry.

Charles Moore

WOMAN OF THE YEAR, 1.8 MILLION B.C.

Late one afternoon last summer, in the fossil-rich Olduvai Gorge of Tanzania, a team of anthropologists were walking back to camp when they came to a sisal bush. Turning to avoid the sharp branches, Tim White of the University of California at Berkeley spied a bone on the ground - and knew from its distinctive shape that it belonged to an ancient human. Behind him, Donald Johanson of the Institute of Human Origins saw more fossils. The remains, they reported last week in the British journal Nature, were of a

1.8 million-year-old Homo habilis, the first member of the family of man. The species was discovered in the late 1950's, but the Olduvai fossils included the only skull and limb bones ever found from the same specimen - and are challenging the standard view of human evolution.

The creature, probably a woman of about 30, had a strikingly modern skull and face. But her body was apelike, under three and a half feet tall, and with long arms - barely changed from 1 million years earlier. It took our ancestors only the next 200,000 years to evolve their modern appearance. The rapid transition hints that evolution is not gradual, as Darwin's followers say, but instead has long periods of stasis punctuated by abrupt change. The new fossil's long arms also suggest that habilis spent a good deal of time in trees, to escape predators, sleep or look for food. Only by the time of Homo erectus 1.6 million years ago did our ancestors evolve a modern form and come down from the trees for good.

(From an article in "Newsweek", June 1, 1987.)

The Editors

PREHISTORIC SYPHILIS

Syphilis-causing organisms, called treponemes, have long plagued certain scientists, but not in the usual sense. Rather, historians of disease are unsure how and where treponemes originated.

Noting that the earliest reports of syphilis and related diseases did not appear in the Old World until after 1500, many scientists have suggested that Columbus' crew and other voyagers might have carried treponemes back with them when they returned from the New World. Several decades ago, this theory received support from the discovery of 3,000-year-old human bones from the New World that seemed to show signs of treponemal disease.

However, in the last 20 years, medical historians have suggested that syphilis did indeed affect Europeans in the Middle Ages, but was misdiagnosed as leprosy at the time. Before 1500, say these researchers, people believed that leprosy spread by sexual contact, was highly contagious and responded to mercurial compounds. Yet all of these factors fit syphilis more than leprosy.

Now, immunological tests on bones from a Pleistocene-epoch bear prove that treponemal infections in the New World date back at least 11,000 years. In the September 3 "Nature", scientists report that, using antibodies specific to treponemes, they successfully identified treponemal material on the bear's bones. This is the first successful use of immunology to detect an ancient disease-causing organism, says Bruce Rothschild of St. Elizabeth Hospital Medical Center Hospital in Youngstown, Ohio, who worked with William Turnbull of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago.

According to Rothschild, this finding "pushes back the history of any identifiable treponemal disease substantially". Although the new finding

does not resolve the debate about the origin of treponemal infections, the immunological technique will help scientists trace the history of these and other infections. While paleopathologists could previously only diagnose ancient infections, this new technique allows a direct identification of the infectious organism itself. Using the appropriate antibodies, says Rothschild, scientists might apply this technique to the history of smallpox or tuberculosis.

(From "Science News", Volume 132, September 26, 1987)

The Editors

1988 OFFICERS OF THE ALABAMA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The following is a list of nominees to offices in the Alabama Archaeological Society for 1988. Elections for 1988 officers will be held at the A.A.S. winter meeting on December 5.

President	Mr. Baker Dean - Opelika
First Vice President	Ms. Nancy Rohr - Huntsville
Second Vice President	Dr. Charles Ochs - Birmingham
Secretary and Treasurer	Ms. Bettye T. Henson - Huntsville
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STONE AGE SITE GETS PUSHED BACK IN TIME

More than 20 years ago, the potassium argon technique for calculating the age of ancient rocks revealed that early hominid sites at Olduvai Gorge in East Africa dated to 1.8 million years ago, a much older estimate than had generally been recognized. The same method, which depends on the decay of potassium's naturally radioactive isotope to the non-radioactive gas argon, now has significantly pushed back the age of another East African site containing remains of later hominid activity during the Stone Age.

Artifact-bearing layers of volcanic ash at the Olorgesalie river basin in Kenya were formerly estimated to be about 500,000 years old, but now are more accurately dated at 700,000 to 900,000 years old, report Bethany A. Bye of the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

Large numbers of stone hand-axes have been uncovered at Olorgesalie, which is considered a key site of the Stone Age Acheulean culture. The almond-shaped axes are the primary Acheulean remains. The Acheulean era ranged from about 1.4 million to 150,000 years ago, but within that expanse there are few well dated points at which cultural change can be examined.

In addition to revising the age of artifact-rich portions of the Olorgesalie site, Bye and her co-workers found that lower layers of volcanic ash differ chemically from overlying layers that contain the abundant Acheulean remains. They suggest that the lower and upper layers were created by separate volcanic eruptions.

According to J. A. J. Gowlett of the University of Liverpool, England, the aging of Olorgesalie leaves researchers wondering whether they can confidently place any African hominid sites in the period between 700,000 and 300,000 years ago.

(Article by B. Bower in "Science News", Volume 132, September 26, 1987)

The Editors

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Available issues of *Journal of Alabama Archaeology* Vol. 20-29 each issue (\$2.50 to Members) \$5.00 pp
Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations (*Journal of Alabama Archaeology*) Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint, each issue \$5.00 pp
 Special Publication 1 — Fort Mitchell \$2.00 pp
 Special Publication 2 — *The Archaeological Sequence at Durant Bend, Dallas County Alabama* \$4.50 pp
 Special Publication 3 — *Archaeological Investigations at Horseshoe Bend* \$6.50 pp
Handbook of Alabama Archaeology Part 1, Point Types \$10.00 pp
 Lively, Long, Josselyn - *Pebble Tool Paper* \$3.00 pp
Investigations in Russell Cave, published by the National Park Service \$7.50 pp
Exploring Prehistoric Alabama through Archaeology (Juvenile) \$7.00 pp

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

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MAIL TO:
MRS. BETTYE T. HENSON
SECRETARY AND TREASURER
 7608 Teal Drive, S.W.
 Huntsville, Alabama 35802

Alabama Archaeological Society

Mr. Amos J. Wright
 2602 Green Mountain Road SE
 Huntsville, Alabama 35803



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