Alabama Archaeological Society

Associate Editors
Bart Henson
Dorothy Luke



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

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RAIDERS OF THE SACRED SITES

At the southeastern tip of Utah, by the mouth of the cave known as the Mummy's Hand, the old woman they call Khe-tha-a-hei fell to her knees in prayer. Her anguished cries were carried for miles by the desert wind. She chanted of death, of desecration. Sacred Native American burial chambers had been gutted and trashed. Some mummified bodies had been carted away; others mutilated and strewn about. Items such as priceless baskets, jewelry, feather capes, bowls, sandals and fur robes had been ripped from the ground to be packaged for sale.

With some knowledge of locating ancient shrines gained from university courses in geology and archaeology and motivated by a black market that currently pays as much as \$150,000 for a pristine pre-Columbian basket, the looters came during the spring of 1984 for the graves of the Anasazi, the "Ancient Ones", to harvest artifacts unseen for almost 1,200 years. The artifacts from a single Anasazi cliff dwelling could bring up to \$1 million.

Along with ceremonial objects and ancient tools, the raiders took the mummified remains of Anasazi children. According to David L. Krouskop, lead ranger of the Bureau of Land Management's Moab District in Utah, the asking price for quality specimens starts at \$5,000. The best of these are said to have been preserved by casting them into acrylic blocks, an expensive high-tech procedure.

Archaeologists and art historians link the present wave of desecration to the first major auction of American Indian art at New York's Parke-Bernet Galleries, in 1971. The record prices received then for domestic relics stunned the international art world, which had virtually ignored them, and caused raiders to turn their attention to treasures on American soil.

The concentrated looting that began in an area of archaeological sites throughout the Four Corners area, where Utah, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico meet, spawned a nationwide epidemic of the destruction of sacred sites, many of them on Federal lands, from Maine to Florida, Alaska to California, and in most of the states in between.

Civil War battlefields in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia are, for example, now systematically being plundered by organized armies employing sophisticated electronic metal detectors in their search for military insignia and accouterments. In southeast Oklahoma, two individuals stole as many as 400 pottery vessels within one year. Throughout Texas, raiders have been unearthing burial mounds in their search for religious offerings of the Caddo. Few among the more knowledgeable raiders have the resources, or inclination, to market effectively the objects they steal.

"College-trained ringleaders hire students to find burials, do the excavation and take the risks", says Dr. Ted G. Birkedal, a National Parks Service regional archaeologist now based in Anchorage. "When the students are done, a middleman markets the products. We know of one anthropologist who has made over \$1 million". The artifacts are sold to museums, galleries and private collectors, who frequently do not know, or question, how they were obtained.

(From an article by Derek V. Goodwin in "The New York Times Magazine", December 7, 1986)

The Editors

TENNESSEE RIVER PROJECT



Archaic midden, 14 feet deep



Fire hearth at 12 feet

The project on the Tennessee River, just east of Redstone Arsenal boundary, was conducted by the Office of Archaeological Research from September to November of 1986. Two low-profile mounds about 1/4-mile from the Tennessee River were excavated and were from the Woodland Period. The excavation on the banks of the Tennessee River uncovered early Archaic midden, but no evidence of Paleo was found. Since this site is only about 3 miles upriver from the Quad Site, it was hoped that Paleo evidence might exist.

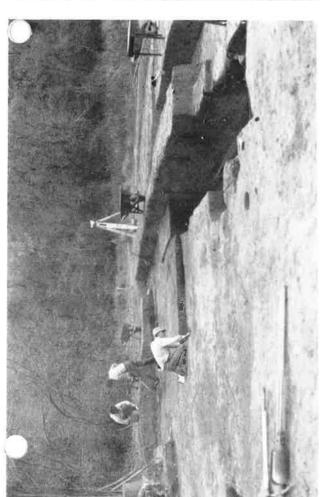
All photos by A. Wright.



Post holes on mound crest



Amos Wright trimming profile



Woodland bound near Tennessee River



Dr. Jim Knight, Project Director

CHAPTER NEWS

Birmingham Chapter

The Birmingham Archaeological Society met on Thursday, November 13, at the Red Mountain Museum. Dr. S. M. Mahan and his wife from Montevallo presented an excellent program entitled "Travels to Maya Land".

Dr. Mahan, a dentist, and his wife have worked during the past several years as volunteers in Yucatan to provide a dental service to the natives of this region. During their visits, they traveled to remote areas where they had an opportunity to see descendants of the Mayans, who still retain some of their ancient customs. They also had an opportunity to see several ruins that are seldom viewed by tourists and brought some of their artifacts for display.

Eloise Clark

Cullman Chapter

The December meeting was held on the 13th in Hartselle, at the home of Mr. Dewitt Coleman. Mr. Coleman has an outstanding collection of artifacts, and many good stories that go with his collection.

Howard King

Huntsville Chapter

The Huntsville Chapter held a combination December meeting and Christmas party on December 19 at the home of Dorothy Luke. Chapter elections were held for 1987 officers: President, Roy Blair; First Vice President, Bart Henson; Second Vice President, Ken Helms; Secretary/Treasurer, Nancy Rohr; and Librarian, Georgia Dunn.

The Huntsville Chapter meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the conference room of the United Way office on Traylor Island. The speakers at the January 20 meeting will be Richard and Miriam Hoover. Dr. and Mrs. Hoover will present a slide-illustrated program on Peruvian archaeological sites, emphasizing the Nazca lines and Machu Picchu.

Dorothy Luke

Muscle Shoals Chapter

The Muscle Shoals Chapter held its October meeting on the 13th at the Indian Mound Museum in Florence. Eighteen members and guests attended this first meeting after a three-month summer break in meetings. Charles Moore presented a program on regional Indian history. He discussed the major cultural periods from Paleo through Mississippian for the Northern Alabama region.

The November meeting was held on the 10th. Amos Wright of Huntsville, who is a member of the Alabama DeSoto Commission, brought the chapter a very interesting program about DeSoto's journey through the Southeast, but in

particular about his time spent in Alabama. Amos used slides of a number of old maps which helped identify DeSoto's possible route. Twenty-two members and guests attended the meeting. A nominating committee was appointed to nominate a new slate of officers.

The December meeting was an annual Christmas supper meeting for members and families. Bart Henson presented the program, a slide-illustrated summary of the rock art research done during the last year in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee.

Charles Moore

PUBLICATION AVAILABLE

THE PREHISTORIC NATIVE AMERICAN ART OF MUD GLYPH CAVE - Edited by Charles H. Faulkner.

On a cold day in early 1980, two members of the U.S. Forest Service crawled into a narrow cave in an East Tennessee hillside. After scrambling through mud, knee-deep water, and keyhole passages in the rock, they found themselves face to face with ancient drawings of humans, animals, and symbols - a hitherto unsuspected body of prehistoric art. This copiously illustrated book tells the story of their amazing find.

Funded by the National Geographic Society, a team of scientists led by University of Tennessee anthropologists began to study the drawings or "mud glyphs" soon after the initial discovery. They produced a detailed map and extensively photographed the cave. An archaeological survey of the floor produced abundant torch charcoal for radiocarbon dating.

The dated charcoal samples suggest that Mud Glyph Cave may have been entered as early as the Middle Woodland period - A.D. 465 plus or minus 60 years. Unquestionably the most intensive visits occurred in the Mississippian period, some 800 years ago. Most of the glyphs were drawn by either late Hiwassee Island or early Dallas artists, prehistoric ancestors of either the Cherokee or Creek Indians.

The editor: Charles H. Faulkner is professor of anthropology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

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Mud Glyph Cave: Its Discovery and Archaeological Study - Howard H. Earnest, Jr., and Charles H. Faulkner

The Underground Setting: Survey and Mapping of Mud Glyph Cave - Art Cathers

Recording the Glyphs: Photo Documentation of Mud Glyph Cave - Bill Deane

Dating the Glyphs: Charcoal and Stoke Marks - Charles H. Faulkner, Robert Stuckenrath, and Gary D. Crites

Scratches on the Walls: Other Cave Visitors - Ronald C. Wilson Serpents and Dancers: Art of the Mud Glyph Cave - John Muller Art in Mud and Stone: Mud Glyphs and Petroglyphs in the Southeast - B. Bart Henson

Prehistoric Cavers of the Eastern Woodlands - Patty Jo Watson

136 pages, 47 photographs. \$12.95, plus \$1.50 postage and handling. Available from: The University of Tennessee Press; P. O. Box 6525; Ithaca, New York 14850.

The Editors

ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMPUTER NETWORK

The Archeological Society of Virginia (ASV) and the Eastern States Archeological Federation (ESAF) have teamed together and formed the first archaeological computer network that is directed toward the amateur archaeologist. ASVNET and ESAFNET are a combined service that will offer anyone with a computer, telephone modem, and communications software a place where they can get the latest archaeological news, current events, and activities. ASVNET and ESAFNET are free to the callers and will be on-the-air starting January 1, 1987. The hours are 6:00 to 11:00 p.m. (EST) Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. (EST) Saturday and Sunday, and 1:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. (EST) holidays. The communications settings for your modem are the same that you would use for CompuServ, except that you do not need an ID number and password. These settings are 1) date word length: 7 bits, 2) parity: even, 3) number of stop bits: 1 bit, 4) XON/OFF flow control: ON, and 5) full duplex: ON. The network computer phone line number is 703/354-2827. You can call in at 300 or 1200 baud rate. The network administrator is Wm. Jack Hranicky, who is currently the ASV president and is a charter member of SOPA; he designed and operates both networks.

The network offers a single source for date/location of archaeological meetings/conferences all over the U.S., list of latest books and monographs, short articles on latest discoveries, site reports, and artifact discussions, underwater archaeology, historical archaeology which includes museums and displays, worldwide archaeology, anthropology, Indian news, how-to-do-it archaeology, who's who in archaeology, list of U.S. fieldschools and sites requesting volunteers, Roman/Greek/Egyptian archaeology, and lists of state/local archaeological societies with their activities. These items are only a partial listing of some of the selections that are available on the ASV and ESAF network. As new ideas are suggested, we will expand the network even more; our goal is a 40-million-word service by the end of 1987.

The Editors

ACPAC

The following is from the American Committee for Preservation of Archaeological Collections (ACPAC) newsletter, November 1986.

"As reported in our previous Newsletter, federal legislation is pending on the reburial issue. This is the Melcher (democrat of Montana) bill in the Senate, titled the 'Bridge of Respect Bill', thereby loading the dice once more and placing anyone who is opposed to this legislation in the position of being disrespectful of the 'Indian' religion."

"It will be heard in the next session of Congress. As reported previously, there is indeed good reason for all responsible archaeologists to be frightened of this bill. It creates a commission (packed with disproportionate representation of the Indian viewpoint) to investigate and adjudicate claims for 'sacred' items in museums, public and private. As drafted, it implies that private property, legally acquired and legally owned, can be taken away from museums and given to 'Indians' for their disposition. All of this is apparently justified on the grounds of respect for religion and the view that Indian religion is more religious than anybody else's and deserves federal legislation to support it. It is 'disrespectful' for a museum to possess or display sacred Indian objects (although it is 0.K. to own and display religious objects of Christian, Jewish, Moslem, Buddhist, or other religious persuasions)."

"We believe that archaeology is legal, moral, and responsible in its efforts to uncover past history. We believe that no one on earth can document a relationship to skeletons thousands of years old and that these are important sources of information on the history of the human race. We believe that legislation based on race or religion is unconstitutional. These are our only special interests; they seem reasonably congruent with civilized history and the history of the U.S."

The Editors

BOOK REVIEW

UNCOVERING THE ANCIENT WORLD - by H.V.F. Winstone. 393 pages, \$24.95. Available from Facts on File, Inc.; 460 Park Avenue South; New York, New York 10016.

This is a fine quality book with quality paper and photographs that tells the story of the explorers who pioneered the discovery of man's past. Winstone tells the story with a sense of excitement that matches the drama itself - Schlieman at Troy, Mariette and Petrie in the Nile Valley, Evans in Crete, Wooley at Ur, and Carter in the Valley of the Kings. These explorers unearthed much of classic history in the old world in less than 100 years. Here in this book, with its fine illustrations, the author brings this history to us in a readable and fascinating manner. Winstone recounts this history based on the latest research and findings available. One of the best quality books we have seen by this publisher, and at a very reasonable price. A good buy.

The Editors

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE		
Available issues of Journal of Alabama Archaeology Vol. 20-29 each issue		
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
Lively, Long, Josselyn - Pebble Tool Paper		
Investigations in Russell Cave, published by the National Park Service		
Exploring Prehistoric Alabama through Archaeology (Juvenile) \$7.00 pp		
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Alabama Archaeological Society

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



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