

Alabama Archaeological Society

Stones & Bones

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Troy State University...

Chapter News

Birmingham Chapter...

The Birmingham Chapter met Thursday, January 9th and held elections. Officers elected were Bill Fowler as President and Steven Meredith as Secretary/Treasurer. Eugene Futato gave a talk with slides on current research projects being conducted by the Office of Archaeological Services. Nineteen members were present for the meeting.

The Birmingham Chapter meets at 7:00 on the second Thursday of each month at Alabama Outdoors, 3504 Hwy 31 in Homewood.

Tuscaloosa Chapter...

The Tuscaloosa chapter met Thursday, January 23, 1997 at 7:00 PM. Several members were present along with a couple of visitors. Tony Ferrell gave a presentation on 19th century pottery and pottery making in the area. Bill Adkison gave a presentation on Indian pottery and rock material found in the area. After this was a show and tell where members shared recent finds with the group. Next officers for the new year were selected. The chapter meets every 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM in the conference room of the Tuscaloosa Public Library.

The Troy State chapter met Thursday, January 16, 1997 at 5:00 PM. The new officers conducted their first meeting of their terms. These officers included Kathy Helton as President, Tony Hartley as Vice President, Clarissa Eleam as Treasurer, and Amanda McBride as Secretary. About fifteen members attended. Dues were collected and T-shirt sales were announced. If anyone would like a Troy State University Archaeological Society T-shirt, please contact Clarissa Eleam at the TSU Archaeological Research Center, (334) 670-3638. Other items of business included discussion of fund raising and community service activities. The next chapter meeting will be held at the TSU Archaeological Research Center on Thursday, February 20, 1997.

The following chapters are officially recognized as active chapters of the Alabama Archaeological Society:

Troy State University

Tuscaloosa

East Alabama (Auburn-Opelika)

Huntsville

Birmingham

Dothan

Muscle Shoals

Cullman County

Jacksonville/Coosa Valley

We need names and addresses of the **President of each Chapter**. Please send to the address below.

Also, if you would like to be considered an active chapter, please send name of Chapter and president to:

Troy State University
Archaeological Research Center
Stones&Bones Editors, 40 Eldridge Hall.
Troy, Alabama 36082

Experts Split on Maker of Ancient Tools

Scientists have found the oldest known objects made by human ancestors, thousands of stone tools that were crafted more than 2.5 million years ago.

The finding in Ethiopia pushes back the record of tool-making by about 200,000 years. The tools show a surprising degree of craftsmanship and raise a nagging question: Who made them?

The standard answer is that the finding represents the earliest sign of genus *Homo*, the evolutionary group that includes modern humans and their closest extinct relatives. Tool-making is traditionally considered a mark of *Homo*.

But some scientists say the new found tools may have been made by smaller-brained relatives of *Homo* instead.

No fossils of *Homo* or anything else were found with the tools to help settle the matter, said Sileshi Semaw of Rutgers University, principal author of the paper announcing the discovery in today's issue of the journal *Nature*.

Semaw believes early members of *Homo* made the nearly 3,000 stone tools found between 1992 and 1994 in the Gona area of Ethiopia. The collection includes rounded, fist-sized stones and small, sharp-edged flakes. The larger stones had been smashed together to create the flakes.

The tools were probably used to crack nuts and sharpen sticks for digging up tubers and other food, Semaw said. They may have been used to cut dead animals apart, too, but the excavation

found no evidence of carcasses with the tools, he said.

Semaw and his co-authors said the tools showed a surprisingly sophisticated control of the flaking process, and that they generally resembled tools from elsewhere that were made nearly 1 million years later.

That contradicts assumptions that tools made so long ago would be inferior to later ones.

Similar tools had been reported before from the area, but their ages could not be so well fixed. They are probably the same age as the newly reported ones, he said.

The new-found tools are 2.5 million to 2.6 million years old, based on dating of the volcanic ash above and dirt below the layer where about half the tools were found.

"This firmly establishes that the Gona tools are very old, indeed the oldest artifact assemblage we know of," said Alison Brooks, an anthropology professor at George Washington University who was not involved in the project. "I think this is pretty important for our understanding of the whole course of evolution of human tools."

The implements are sophisticated enough that human ancestors must have started tool making earlier, she said.

Taken from the Montgomery Advertiser; Thursday, January 23, 1997.

The New Americans

Down the plains swept the mighty hunters, slaying mammoths and bison with spears made lethal by carefully carved stone points. The hunters' kill sites were discovered decades ago at Clovis and Folsom, New Mexico. And for decades many archaeologists believed that those hunters were not only the first Americans, but the ones from which all other Native American cultures descended. After the Clovis culture disappeared around 11,000 years ago, the scenario went, it spread down the Andes and into South America. Last April, archaeologist Anna Roosevelt of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago and

the University of Illinois presented evidence undermining this picture. The Clovis people, she says, had contemporaries, not descendents, in South America who led a very different life.

Roosevelt has been working in Brazilian Amazon since 1983. Early on she heard about cave paintings and unusual stone tools. But many of the artifacts had been found out of context, and because they looked different from Clovis artifacts, many archaeologists had assumed they were a later development. Without agriculture, it was assumed, people would not have been able to sustain themselves in the rain forest. Roosevelt had no faith in those assumptions. In 1988 she set out to investigate a set of caves at Monte Alegre, in sandstone hills high above the lower Amazon floodplain, that she had first seen described by the nineteenth-century naturalist Alfred Russell Wallace.

The day after she arrived at Monte Alegre, a local teacher and about 30 students led Roosevelt to the Caverna da Pedra Pintada-the Cave of Painted Stone. The paintings were striking: red and yellow hand-prints, stylized human figures, animals, and geometric shapes. Experts had seen them before but had assumed they were relatively recent. No one had bothered to dig at the site. In 1991, Roosevelt returned to excavate.

Over the past five years, she and her colleagues have turned up a mountain of evidence pointing to the cave's occupation as early as 11,200 years ago-by humans who were contemporaries of the Clovis hunters but had little in common with them. The stone spear points Roosevelt has unearthed are stemmed and triangular, like the blades of butcher knives and quite unlike the fluted Clovis points (which are shaped more like dinner knives). The Monte Alegrans used those points to spear not mammoths and bison but fish, rodents, turtles, and birds. Judging from the bones Roosevelt has found, some of the fish were nearly five feet long, suggesting they might have been speared from boats. She has also found woodworking tools. Finally, the remains of tropical fruits, Brazil nuts, palm seeds, and other plants are abundant at the site, most of them starchy, oily, and vitamin-rich. "They didn't have a hard living," Roosevelt says. "But you see a very

different subsistence pattern from big-game hunters."

The Monte Alegrans were different in spirit as well; the paintings prove that. Although the cave was occupied for a thousand years, Roosevelt found lumps of pigment and paint-splattered artifacts only in the oldest layer of occupation. They suggests the cave paintings were made 11,200 years ago. No paintings have ever been found on Clovis sites.

Some of Roosevelt's peers have disputed her dating, arguing that Monte Alegre may be only 10,500 years old-just young enough to have been settled by Clovis people. Roosevelt finds that impossible. "People in South America were not living the same way as their contemporaries in North America," she says. "We have to open our minds to different regions and adaptations." She believes the people of Monte Alegre, like the Clovis people, came originally from Asia but perhaps used a different migration route. "The Clovis people were landlubbers," she says. "The Amazonians took the coast road." From the coasts of Asia they crossed the Bering land bridge and came down the west coast all the way to South America. There, Roosevelt speculates, they followed the big rivers of Columbia or Venezuela into the heart of the Amazon Basin, into a region where people like them were not supposed to have survived.

Taken from Discover magazine, January 1997.

Calendar

April 4-6, 1997. The First Annual North Georgia Knap-In. The North Georgia Knap-In is expected to attract knappers from all over the Southeast and even Central U.S. People will be buying and selling tools and rock, but mainly it is designed to bring people with an interest in knapping together. Primitive bows and atlatls will also be featured.

The event is being held at Lutherwood Campground near Lake Allatoona. You can camp out or stay in a local motel. The site has a well-lighted pavilion, showers, campfire sites, and RV

hookups. Restaurants are nearby, and the Knap-In will host a pizza party Saturday night.

To get to the campground, take Exit 121 off I-75. Go south on Glade Road one-half mile, then turn right on Hwy. 92 (Cherokee Road). Go three-quarters of a mile and turn right, following the signs for 293 North. Turn left on 293, go two miles, take the first right after the bridge, then take the second drive on the right.

For more information, contact:

Mark Bracken
330 Oakhill Drive
Canton, GA 30114
(770) 345-7305

June 15 - July 12. Alabama Museum of Natural History's Museum Expedition #19 held this year in Natchez, Mississippi, provides excellent field experience for high school students in archaeology and natural science. Participants learn excavation, lab procedures, and artifact identification. Four week-long sessions beginning on Saturday and ending on Sunday. For more information call (205) 348-0534. Admission is charged.

July 8 - August 16, 1997. Arkansas Archaeological Survey - University of Arkansas Field School. An archaeological field school will be taught at the Parkin site in northeast Arkansas from July 8 through August 16, 1997. The Parkin site is a 17-acre fortified Mississippian and Proto-historic period village located in Parkin Archeological State Park, with laboratory and curation facilities immediately adjacent to the site. Archaeological and ethnohistoric evidence suggest that Parkin is the town of Casqui visited by the Hernando de Soto expedition in June, 1541. Previous excavations revealed that the site was continuously occupied for as long as 500 years.

The 1997 excavations will investigate a portion of the defensive palisade that surrounded the town, and will also continue work on sixteenth-century structures in the village area. Students will be taught basic excavation techniques, transit use, mapping, record keeping, laboratory methods, and flotation. Archaeological method and theory and local prehistory will also be addressed.

Students will earn six (6) semester hours (either undergraduate or graduate) in ANTH 4256: Archeological Field Session. Out-of-State tuition is waived for non-University of Arkansas students. Tuition and fees are \$504.00 (undergraduate) and \$846.00 (graduate). There is an additional \$15.00 application fee (\$25.00 for graduate students) for students not enrolled at the University of Arkansas. Students will also be required to pay \$60.00 to cover on-site housing. A hired cook will be provided, but students will be responsible for food costs. Deadline for receipt of applications is May 31, 1997. Enrollment is limited to 24 students.

For further information and applications, contact: Dr. Jeffrey M. Mitchem, Arkansas Archeological Survey, Parkin Archeological State Park, P. O. Box 241, Parkin, AR 72373-0241. Telephone: (501) 755-2119.

E-mail: jmitchem@comp.uark.edu

New Members

Judith L. Gillies
PO Box 704
Moundville, AL 35474

Kevin E. Schatte
302 Reed Street
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

Contributions

Judith Gillies - Wimberly Fund

A special recognition and thank you goes to Panamerican Consultants of Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Panamerican met half of the fund raising goal of the Wimberly and Mahan Funds by contributing \$250 to each Fund.

Publications

In Search of This and That: Tales from an Archaeologist's Quest by Ivor Noel Hume. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 159 pages. \$19.45.

An antiquary, according to 17th century writer John Earl, "is one that hath that unnatural disease to be enamored of old age and wrinkles, and loves all things (as Dutch-men do with cheese), the better for being mouldy and worm eaten." If you share, with me, an affinity for the ancient or take pleasure in mysteries of the past, then you should know Ivor Noel Hume. For many visitors to Colonial Williamsburg, who have encountered his avuncular visage on screen or his British accented voice emanating from a wooden barrel concealing a speaker, Noel Hume is the quintessential archaeologist. He may also be the most read archaeological writer in America. His latest books, "Martin's Hundred" (1982) and "The Virginia Adventurer" (1994), tell the story of recent discoveries at the oldest English colonial sites on the East Coast.

Unlike most archaeological writers, however, Hume isn't content simply to explain what happened at Williamsburg or Jamestown or Roanoke. For him, the quest is paramount. Above all, Noel Hume is a detective, and although he forgoes any allusion to Sherlock Holmes or Hercule Poirot, it's not hard to imagine him safeguarding his "little grey cells" under a deerstalker. In these twenty essays, selected from the magazine *Colonial Williamsburg*, he demonstrates how much fun can be had tracking down elusive and seemingly insignificant clues left by long-forgotten colonists. In the process, of course, we learn a great deal about our early history.

While Noel Hume gladly acknowledges the thrill that comes from discovering a buried artifact, he makes a stronger case for the joys of intellectual discovery. The owner of a silver shoe buckle comes alive for us when he points out how the decoration on one side was worn down by a man "who habitually crossed his feet." An unusual distribution of nails in a 17th century

Virginian's grave led Noel Hume on a year's long search of European castle and church tombs, eventually establishing the ubiquity of gable-lidden coffins at that remote era. As he notes, archaeologists frequently rely on a rule-of-thumb that estimates for every three month's digging there should be nine months of post excavation research. This long-term study of excavated artifacts, an activity the public seldom sees and easily overlooks, is the source of most of our knowledge of the archaeological past.

Not surprisingly, then, some interpretations made on-site while the dirt flies and television cameras roll can be wide of the mark. Noel Hume is unusually candid in admitting his own errors, and in explaining how mistakes (his and those of others) can be corrected, particularly one made by a pioneer of historical archaeology, Jean "Pinky" Harrington. While searching in 1949 for Sir Walter Raleigh's Lost Colony on Roanoke Island, Harrington found what he thought was the settlement's earthen fort. During a re-excavation of the site in the late 1980's, Noel Hume and his wife Audrey, determined that the fort dated to the mid-18th century. Furthermore, in the forty years since Harrington's work, our improved knowledge of 16th century artifacts enabled them to identify metallurgical crucibles and other arcane artifacts from the workshop of Thomas Hariot, one of the leading scientists of Elizabethan England and a prominent member of the Roanoke expedition.

As Noel Hume observes, the history of archaeology has been a journey "from the sublime to the meticulous." This progress is perhaps best exemplified by the recent exciting discovery of James Fort, the original 1607 English settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, a turn of events, by the way, that can give all local supporters of archaeology hope that the so far elusive cemetery and fort at Old Mobile may yet be found. Locating James Fort was accomplished partly by luck (the first exploratory excavations came down directly on one of the fort's bulwarks), but the crucial confirmatory evidence came from the study of many small artifacts found during painstaking scientific digging. One of the smallest coins ever found in Virginia, a half-groat minted between 1590 and 1592, was found in a pit filled in 1610. If this tiny coin

had been wrenched from its resting place by relic hunters, its great historical significance and its archaeological importance in dating the fort site would have been irretrievably lost.

Far from being "mouldy and worm-eaten," this old antiquary's tale is rollicking good fun, written with a punster's wit and a sleuth's appreciation of detail. In spite of the occasional editor's blunder (such as an insistence on "shard" for the correct "sherd"), this beautifully illustrated collection is a delight.

Greg Waselkov

Associate Professor of Anthropology

University of South Alabama

Taken from the Mobile Register

January 26, 1997.

What's Happening Around the State

The University of Alabama will once again conduct an archaeological field school at Dust Cave, in northwest Alabama near Florence. Pending final approval of a grant from the National Science Foundation, The University of Alabama will provide financial support for each of ten students accepted for the 1997 summer field school at Dust Cave. Support is anticipated to include \$2,500 cash stipend, tuition, fees, lodging, food, and reimbursement of some or all travel expenses for each student. Selection will be competitive based on academic achievement and faculty recommendations.

The University of Alabama is also seeking a graduate student with training in archaeological botany to serve as a staff assistant during the field school. The position includes a modest salary, food, and lodging. This is an excellent opportunity for thesis or dissertation research in the area of early (Paleoindian through Middle Archaic) plant utilization in the mid south.

Governor Fob James chose Dr. Craig Sheldon as the AAS Representative to the Alabama Historical Commission. Craig's term began January 1, 1997 and will continue for 6 years.

Dues Reminder!!

A reminder that AAS Dues are due. See the last page of the newsletter for details. Members must renew their dues by March 31st in order to continue receiving the *Stones&Bones* and the *Journal*. While you have your checkbook out, go ahead and make your contribution to the Public Education Fund, Steven B. Wimberly Fund, and the Edward C. Mahan Research Fund. The society needs your help today!!!

Scholarship Grants

The Alabama Archaeological Society will award two scholarships this year in the amount of \$250.00 each to two students actively engaged in an archaeological research project. Proposals for the scholarship grants must be submitted to the Scholarship Committee Chairman by March 1st. The Scholarship Committee shall review the proposals and make recommendations to the Board of Directors at the Spring BOD meeting. The Board of Directors shall vote on the proposals at the Spring meeting and an announcement of the recipients shall be made by March 31st.

Minimum criteria for the grants shall be: 1) the student recipients must be a member of the Alabama Archaeological Society, 2) the research project that the student is involved with must be located in the State of Alabama, 3) the student must be an undergraduate or graduate student enrolled in a college or university in the State of Alabama with an active anthropology program, 4) the student must submit a letter of endorsement from an anthropology instructor, and 5) the student will be required to present a paper on his or her research project at the 1997 Winter meeting.

Send scholarship proposals to:

McDonald Brooms

Archaeological Research Center

40 Eldridge Hall

Troy, AL 36082

DUST CAVE SUMMER 1997

(June 9 to August 1, 1997)

Join an interdisciplinary team of scientists, students and volunteers as they explore the deeply stratified remains of some of the earliest inhabitants of the Tennessee Valley in northwest Alabama. **Live** with other participants in a tent camp near the Cave as you experience the day to day operation of a long-term field project in South-eastern Archaeology. **Learn** as you work and study alongside professional archaeologists, biologists, and geologists through actual participation in daily dig activities as well as through scheduled classroom sessions in the field camp. **Research** your own student project and report the results on the Internet. All in all, a unique undergraduate experience awaits highly motivated students who wish to experience archaeology in action.

Students who are citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. and who are presently enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program are eligible to participate in The University of Alabama field school. Each student will be enrolled in two undergraduate courses for a total of **12 semester hours of credit**.

Courses include:

Anthropology 269: Field Archaeology
(six semester hours)

Anthropology 450: Topics in Archaeology
(six semester hours)

Enrollment limited to 10 students.
Credits can be transferred at the discretion
of the student's own university



Photo by Jeff Shaw

Dust Cave excavations in progress.

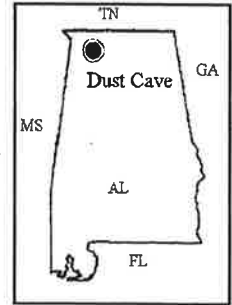


Photo by Jeff Shaw

Field camp near Dust Cave.

Pending final approval of a grant from the National Science Foundation, The University of Alabama will provide financial support for each of the ten students accepted for the 1997 summer field school at Dust Cave. Support is anticipated to include \$2,500 cash stipend, tuition, fees, lodging, food and reimbursement of some or all travel expenses for each student.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

see our **HOMEPAGE** on the World Wide Web
or address inquiries/request application materials from:

Dr. Boyce Driskell, Program Director
13075 Moundville Archaeological Park
Moundville, AL 35474
phone (205) 371-2266
FAX (205) 371-2494
email: BDRISKEL@UA1VM.UA.EDU

The Dust Cave Project is sponsored by the Office of Archaeological Services, The University of Alabama Museums and funded in part through grants from the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Alabama Historical Commission, and the National Science Foundation (pending).

Check it out on the Web! <http://attila.atg.ua.edu>
then select Dust Cave

UNDERGRADUATE ARCHAEOLOGY

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Available issues of *Journal of Alabama Archaeology*

Vol. 20-31, each issue (two issues per volume).....	\$3.50pp
Vol. 32 & up, each issue (two issues per volume).....	\$6.00pp
<i>Stanfield- Worley Bluff Shelter Excavations</i> (Journal of Alabama Archaeology)	
Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint.....	\$7.50pp
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<i>Handbook of Alabama Archaeology Part I, Point Types</i>	\$15.00pp
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**Alabama State Artifact
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