

Stones & Bones

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Greenwood Island Pottery Dated to 1,000 BC

By Carey L. Geiger

An age of 1,000 to 800 BC was recently obtained on a charcoal sample recovered in a 1997 archaeological excavation on Big Greenwood Island site, 22Ja516, on the Mississippi Gulf coast. Current research links this charcoal to the first use of indigenous ceramic vessels on the east Mississippi coast. Bonnie Gums, staff archaeologist of the Center for Archaeological Studies at the University of South Alabama, and a team of volunteers performed the field excavation.

These vessels, known as Norwood Pottery Series, are distinctive. Their clay paste contained plant fibers to strengthen the vessel during firing and for use. Their broken sherds are easily identified by the impressions left by these fibers. Twenty-five fiber-temper sherds and one clay ball were found with the charcoal. A second feature was also found. It contained 17 fiber-tempered sherds and 3 cooking balls. These clay balls were used to heat earth ovens before and after the use of pottery. Both features were reported by the field crew as “undisturbed” in their original field notes.

Laboratory examination identified these fiber-temper sherds as being Norwood Plain pottery (Phelps 1965:65-69) of West Florida. Phelps describes the range of Norwood Plain pottery as being along the Gulf coast of Florida from Charlotte County to Santa Rosa County. His stated range inland is to the Georgia state line in the north and Alachua County in the east. We can now say that this cultural marker also extends to the gulf coast of Jackson County Mississippi.

The charcoal sample was AMS-dated to a radiocarbon age of 2750 ±

40 BP for a corrected calibrated date of 1000 to 810 BC. (Testing and dates were provided by Beta Analytic Inc., December 4, 2008). This date gives us an accurate date for the transition period when earth ovens were being replaced by fiber tempered pottery on the Mississippi coast.

Preparation of a manuscript describing the 1997 excavation is in progress and will provide many additional details. It should be completed in 2009.

Reference Cited

Phelps, David

1965 The Norwood Series of Fiber-Tempered Ceramics. Southeastern Archaeological Conference, Bulletin 2.



The exterior surface of a fiber-tempered Norwood Plain potsherd recently dated to 1000 to 810 BC (corrected calibrated date).



The interior surface of a Norwood Plain potsherd.



A clay “cooking” ball from the Big Greenwood Island site (22Ja516).



Membership Dues are Due!

Check your mailing label. In the upper right hand corner is the year in which your AAS membership expires.

Is your time up?

Send your check to
Alabama Archaeological Society
13075 Moundville Archaeological Park
Moundville, AL 35474

Type	U.S.	Foreign
Annual Associate (under 18 years of age)	\$15.00	\$20.00
Annual Individual	\$25.00	\$30.00
Annual Family	\$30.00	\$35.00
Annual Institutional	\$50	\$55
Annual Sustaining Individual	\$35.00	\$40.00
Annual Sustaining Joint	\$40.00	\$45.00
Life Individual	\$500.00	\$600.00
Life Joint	\$600.00	\$700.00

2008 AAS Winter Meeting

By Ashley Dumas

Our Winter Meeting was held on Saturday, December 6, in the beautiful new Shelby Hall science building on the campus of the University of Alabama. The book auction, sales, and refreshments were held in the building's impressive rotunda. Six presentations were heard in a large auditorium.

Erin Phillips gave a fascinating talk on the symbolic arrangement of engraved designs, especially human skeletal parts, on the exteriors of elite Moundville pottery. Ashley Dumas' presentation highlighted an extremely rich Late Woodland Weeden Island site that was recently excavated by the University of South Alabama in Orange Beach. The pottery from this site is some of the most decorative ever made in the prehistoric Southeast.

As part of his presentation, Sam Brooks showed great photographs of over a dozen Middle Archaic stone blade caches from Mississippi. Some of the blades obviously had been ritually killed. The caches included oversized turkey tails, double notched bifaces, shuttle-style bannerstones, and the interesting "covered wagon"-style bannerstones. Of particular note was that many of the blades were over 12 inches long and extremely thin, which must have required exceptional craftsmanship. Sam also discussed the intersection of looting archaeological sites, collector dollars, and the drug trade in Mississippi.

Ed Kurjack presented the new research that he and Oscar Brock have begun on the Stanfield Worley site. This large bluff shelter was excavated by the Alabama Archaeological Society in the early 1960s. Ed and Oscar hope to make a complete report of the excavations and perform some detailed artifact analysis. Several AAS members in the audience that had participated in the excavations were able to fill in some interesting details on the work and gathered for a photo after Ed's talk (see members of the original dig at top of facing page).

Jay Johnson, of the University of Mississippi, gave a review of the Pickwick Basin archaeological report and provided insights and updates on some of the topics explored by that important work.

During the meeting, artifacts from throughout the state were on display, including several cases of famous artifacts from the 1960's Stanfield-Worley bluff shelter excavations.

At the general business meeting, the following new officers were elected:

President: Steven Meredith
1st Vice President: Richard Kilborn
2nd Vice President: Jack Bergstresser
Secretary: Teresa Paglione
Treasurer: Eugene Futato
Assistant Treasurer: Lance Richardson

Journal Editor: Eugene Futato
Assistant Journal Editors: Phil Carr, Ashley Dumas, Van King
Newsletter Editor: Carey Geiger
Assistant Newsletter Editors: Mary Spanos, Jacqlyn Kirkland
At-large board member, filling out Linda Derry's remaining term (term ending in 2009): Erin Phillips
New At-large board members (term ending in 2011): Stuart McGregor, Cathy Meyer, Eric Sipes

At the recommendation of the Board, the general membership voted



Ed Kurjack (fourth from left) presented new research on the Stanfield-Worley site that he and Oscar Brock have begun (see the previous issue of *Stones & Bones*). Several members of the original Stanfield-Worley digs in the 1960s were in attendance (from left to right): Nick Holmes, Craig Sheldon, Elizabeth Sheldon, Ed Kurjack, Carey Oakley, and Margaret Russell.



The book auction benefited the AAS through the funds raised by it, and it benefited the members who had the opportunity to acquire out-of-print books.

A Significant Journey

By Dr. John VanValkenburg

I read about the need for volunteers
in an archaeology bulletin one day
It appeared to be an experience
a pleasant mixture of work and play.
I sent in my reservation and was
told by return mail

That we would camp near no town
along an old Indian trail.

I found myself at the site,
welcomed by volunteers of a sort

They were helpful to share
plans and had a dozen things to report.

The next day we began site work,
each important area divided by string.

That all details had meaning
it was important to record everything.

The days finally drew to a close
we repaired the site as it was found

Packing our items to leave
with nostalgia walked the grounds.

Home I went with satisfaction,
I found myself bragging to some degree,

That others might find a cultural dig
the start of

A SIGNIFICANT JOURNEY.



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Chapter News

News from Gerald Hester and the Muscle Shoals Chapter:

The Muscle Shoals Chapter of the Alabama Archaeology Society met at the Indian Mound Museum in Florence Monday evening at 7:00 PM January 12, 2009. Twenty Four were in attendance, Gerald Hester presided. There was a discussion concerning relocation of the museum and meeting place. We hope we will soon be moving to the former club house of the McFarland golf course. While there is still some opposition to this move we feel it will come about soon. This will give the museum more visibility and a much larger meeting area and should increase our meeting attendance. The Indian Mound is within sight of the club house.

Our program was brought to us by retired NASA engineer Ellis Whitt. The title of the presentation was Heaven's Hundred Acre Site, a site near Town Creek Alabama not far from the Tennessee River. The earliest known serious collector of the site was school principal Horace Holland. Mr. Holland later took archaeologist David DeJarnette to the site which in prehistoric times had been a watering and wallowing site for large animals and consisted of small lakes fed by local springs with knolls surrounded by reeds. The period of ancient habitation was estimated to be 10,500 years. to 13,000 years ago. In modern times the area is being farmed.



Attendees had the opportunity to examine artifact collections related to the sites discussed in the presentations.

to alter the Constitution of the AAS, making the photographer position also carry the duties of web editor. Mary Spanos was elected to this position.

This year the book auction raised several hundred dollars for the AAS general fund.

Many thanks to Mary Bade and Eugene Futato of the Office of Archaeological Research in Moundville for their help with the collections display. Thanks to Judy Knight of The University of Alabama Press for her book sales table and the special discount that was offered to AAS members. Many AAS members chipped in on various tasks throughout the meeting. Their enthusiasm helped to make for a successful meeting and enjoyable time of fellowship. ■

Another Peaceful Transition of Power

Mary Spanos, the outgoing *Stones & Bones* editor, would like to thank all those who contributed articles for the 2008 issues. A grateful "thank you" goes to Allegra Print and Imaging in Hoover, Alabama, who printed the 2008 issues at a generous discount.

Carey L. Geiger, the incoming *Stones & Bones* editor, along with assistant editors Mary Spanos, and Jacqlyn Kirkland, is committed to the timely reporting of the archaeology news of Alabama and surrounding states. We solicit beneficial suggestions, comments, and questions:

careygeiger@msn.com

In recent times it has been estimated over 1,100 fluted points have been found there. Literally thousands of points of most kinds have been found there. Part of Mr. Holland's collection is in the museum at Florence and some of the Muscle Shoals Chapter members have points that came from the site.

Thank you Ellis for such an outstanding program.

The Muscle Shoals Chapter meets each second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM October through June.

News from Bonnie Gums and the Southwest Chapter:

Volunteer Digs: Washington County Courthouse (GPR survey for possible graves), Old Mobile (1MB94), Old St. Stephens (1WN1), the French colonial cemetery site and the Old Brick House site in Biloxi, Greenwood Island site (22JA516) in Pascagoula, and The Village site (1BA608) in Daphne.

Guest Speakers: Over the last year we heard about religious artifacts and ceramics from Pensacola's presidios by Mary Furlong of the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN), geology and archaeology on the Alabama Gulf coast by University of South Alabama's (USA) geologist Dr. Doug Haywick, salt production in southwest Alabama by Dr. Ashley Dumas, three Florida shipwrecks by Dr. Della Scott-Ireton (FPAN), and the ongoing archaeology dig at Old St. Stephens by USA archaeologist George Shorter.

Special Event: Over 40 people, including volunteers and members of the Southwest Chapter and Friends of Old Mobile, attended a reception and awards ceremony honoring volunteers of the Center for Archaeological Studies. The event took place at USA Alumni Hall on Tuesday, September 16. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to 30 volunteers who have dedicated many hours of service since the volunteer program began in the late 1990s. Those honored included Cheryl Alter, Frances Ashcraft, Donnie and Lottie Barrett, Mike Breedlove, Traci Cunningham, Walter Davis, Brad Eklund, John Ellis, Ben and Debi Foster, Jimmy Fox, Carey Geiger, Lindsay Gorum, Dennis Guy, Anna Hey, James Irby, Patrick Johnson, Joy and John Klotz, Jim Long, Jackie McConaha, Maurie Outlaw, Eleanor Pomerat, Tom Rae, Louis Scott, Kate Waselkov, Nick Waselkov, Peter Waselkov, and Dorothy Williams. Certificates and words of thanks were



Bonnie Gums

Southwest Chapter member Jimmy Fox with military button he found at Old St. Stephens dig.

presented by Greg Waselkov, Bonnie Gums, Debi Lawrence, George Shorter and Ashley Dumas.

Field Trips: In March members of the Southwest Chapter of the AAS and the USA Anthropology Club took a field trip to the Arcadia Mill archaeological complex in Milton, Florida, and the Wentworth Museum and Pensacola Historical Museum in downtown Pensacola. A December field trip took us to the 5 Rivers complex in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta and to the Fairhope Museum of History where we were given a personal tour by director and Southwest Chapter member Donnie Barrett. Three Saturday boat trips sponsored by

Blakeley State Park in February, October, and December to the Bottle Creek mounds were led by Greg Waselkov, assisted by Bonnie Gums, Debi Lawrence, and Bridget Tyson (all members of the SW Chapter).

Research and Volunteer Efforts by Southwest Chapter Members: SW Chapter president Carey Geiger has recently completed a draft report on the 1997 excavations by USA and volunteers at the Greenwood Island site (22JA516) in Pascagoula, MS. Jimmy Fox is documenting and mapping the wooden piling remains of the Civil War Fort McIntosh in Mobile Bay. Jackie McConaha is working on a short book on the history of the battleship USS Alabama. Lee Swetman is studying prehistoric ceramic effigies in private collections from Baldwin County.

Pre-Clovis Presentations: During the first-half of 2008 Carey Geiger (SWC president) gave several presentations on the Pre-Clovis research by the University of South Carolina at the Topper site in Allendale County, SC. His presentations were for the Greater Atlanta Archaeological Society of the Society for Georgia Archaeology, East Alabama Chapter of the Alabama Archaeological Society at Auburn University, the Tunican Chapter of the Arkansas Archaeological Society at the University of Arkansas at Monticello, and the Pearl River Chapter of the Mississippi Archaeological Association.

Lab Volunteer Work: A lot of progress has been made processing ceramics from Old St. Stephens site (1WN1) with the help of Tuesday volunteers at USA's Center for Archaeological Studies. We particularly would like to thank Louis Scott, Brad Ekland, and Nick Aronson.



Bonnie Gums

Southwest Chapter members on a field trip to the 5 Rivers complex in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta.

AAS Research Grant

The AAS will grant an award of \$500 this year to a deserving archaeological research project. Grant proposals must be submitted to the Archaeological Resources Chairman by October 1st. The Board of Directors will vote on the proposals and announce the winner at the Winter Meeting. Minimum criteria for the grant are: 1) the project director/grant administrator must be a member of the AAS; 2) the project must be located in Alabama; 3) the project director or his or her representative will be required to present a paper on the archaeological project at the Winter Meeting; and, 4) the project director or other personnel working on the project must submit a written report for publication in the Journal of Alabama Archaeology within twelve months of receiving the grant.

Public Education Grant

The AAS will award public education grants this year in the amount of \$500. Single grant awards shall not exceed \$500. Proposals for grants must be submitted to the Chair of the Public Education Committee (see below) by October 1st. The Board will announce the grant recipient(s) at the Winter Meeting. Minimum criteria for the grants are: 1) the project director/grant administrator must be a member of the AAS, 2) the public education project must be located in the state of Alabama.

AAS Scholarships

The AAS will award up to two scholarships this year in the amount of \$250 each to undergraduate and/or graduate students attending an Alabama college or university. Scholarship nominations are to be submitted to the Archaeological Resources Committee Chair (see below) by October 1. Each eligible student nominee must have an academic sponsor who must submit the nomination on the student's behalf. The nomination must take the form of a letter addressed to the Chair of the Archaeological Resources Committee. The letter must clearly identify both the nominee and the academic sponsor and must include pertinent contact information for both. The nomination letter must indicate the academic degree being sought and progress made to date toward that degree. The letter should include and discuss all the information necessary for the committee to evaluate the nominee. The sponsor should summarize the academic credentials and achievements of the nominee in the body of the nomination letter. The student must also be a member of the AAS.

Submit applications and questions to Erin Phillips, phill018@bama.ua.edu, or 1104 Riverside Drive, Apt B1, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401.

Stones & Bones

Editor: Carey Geiger, Assistant Editors: Jacqlyn Kirkland and Mary Spanos

Stones & Bones is published bi-monthly at the end of January, March, May, July, September, November. The deadline for submitting articles is the beginning of the month of publication. Articles, questions, and comments can be sent via email to:

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