

Stones & Bones

July and Aug. 2015

Volume 57, Issue 4

The Newsletter of the Alabama Archaeological Society

Meet a Member!

Paul Gray is a Huntsville native and retired pathologist. He is a member of the Huntsville Chapter and volunteers in the archaeology lab at Redstone Arsenal.



How did you get interested in archaeology?

I am a retired physician with an interest in archaeology which began about 30 years ago. Becoming interested in how projectile points were used led to the construction and use of atlatls and atlatl darts based on what archaeological information I could find. Since then I have made atlatls for educational use by the Alabama Department of Archives and History and for display by several small museums.

What is your favorite site you worked on or visited?

My family and I used to travel in Mexico to visit archaeological sites. One of the most impressive was the Mayan influenced site of Cacaxtla in the central Mexican state of Tlaxcala. The Warrior Mural especially interested me since it showed the use of atlatls in a realistic way.

Why are you a member of AAS?

As a member of the North Alabama chapter of the Archaeological Institute

of America, I have tried to support the varied lecture series given by excellent visiting archaeologists at UAH. For about the past two years I have been a volunteer with Ben Hoksbergen, Base Archaeologist, Redstone Arsenal.

How many years have you been a member (approximately)?

I have been a member of AAS at least 20 years. I like the sense of context that archaeological knowledge can sometimes provide.

If you would be willing to be interviewed for "Meet a Member", please email Kim Pyszka (kpyszka@aum.edu).



Troy University Excavations at the Thrash Site, Season 2

By Jason Mann

Editor's Note: This is the fourth installment of a feature in the *Stones and Bones* profiling an archaeological site in Alabama that exemplifies sites from a given time period or culture, starting with the Paleoindian, and going forward through time. If you know of a site that has contributed in a major way to our understanding of a particular time period or culture or in some way typifies Alabama sites of a certain age or cultural affiliation, send me a manuscript! This edition focuses on a Gulf Formational site. "Gulf Formational" is a concept devised by John Walthall, Ned Jenkins, and others to distinguish the early ceramic traditions that developed on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts from the Early Woodland traditions that developed in the Ohio drainage system.

This summer, the Troy University Archaeological Research Center (TUARC) Summer Field School went back to the Thrash Site - 1Pk71. As always, some research questions were in mind that hopefully the excavations would reveal answers too. But as things happen, excavations usually reveal more questions

than answers. During the school year, analysis of the previous summer's excavated artifacts indicated that the Thrash site is clearly a Gulf Formational site.

From the previous summer, a nearly complete cord-wrapped dowel impressed pot was discovered along with Alexander Punctate pottery, a few sherds of fiber-tempered plain ware, and one lonesome steatite bowl sherd. Also, the previous year revealed several Santa Fe style projectile points in good association with the early pottery. This direct association should put the argument of the Santa Fe style point's temporal placement to rest.

However, this year, we chose to excavate an area 16 meters south of the previous excavation, and clearly, we got into a slightly earlier area of the site. With a larger crew and a better understanding of how to best approach the site, TUARC was able to excavate 80 square meters to an average depth of 70 cm. Also, with dryer, and much hotter, conditions we were able to carry some excavations over a meter deep. The big problem at the Thrash Site is the water table of the Pea River. When it's wet, excavations units can seldom go below 60cm, but this summer the water was lower so we could go a little deeper. The dry conditions enabled us to safely excavate several deep cooking pits.

One particularly interesting cooking pit we discovered is a textbook example of a hot-rock cooking pit. A cluster of cobbles found directly in contact with another pit full of charred wood indicating that both were in use at the same time. Stones would have been heated in the fire pit and transferred just to the side for cooking. The charred wood pit contained steatite bowl fragments and fiber-tempered pottery, which is great because we should be able to get a good radiocarbon date! Also by taking total samples we should be able to get other useful data with micro-recovery techniques. In between the cobbles, more steatite and fiber-tempered pottery was recovered, and numerous soil samples were taken. Overall, we are hopeful this single feature will fill some of the gaps in our understanding of the Gulf Formational/Early Woodland time-period.

Besides the steatite and fiber-tempered pottery, other pottery sherds of comp-

licated stamped pottery were found in and among the cooking pits. Without doing detailed laboratory analysis, it would be improper to say for certain, but many appear very much like Marksville or Tchefuncte pottery designs that are seen in Louisiana and the Mississippi River Region.

The other cooking pits discovered also had a lot of charred material, burned clay nodules, projectile points, numerous flakes, and other curiosities. Some of the more impressive artifacts discovered include abundant non-local material. Large Coastal Plain Chert cores of imported chert from Southeast Alabama were found, along with large fragments of steatite bowl sherds. The size of the steatite bowl fragments is surprising. Steatite bowl sherds, as a general rule, tend to get smaller the further one travels from the steatite source location in Northern Georgia, but at the Thrash Site, TUARC discovered very large steatite fragments from very large, very heavy steatite bowls. This indicates that the modes and means of transporting these very heavy vessels over long distances during the Gulf Formational period is not something we fully understand.

Overall, the summer's Field School was an overwhelming success. It was hot, and our students, despite some complaints, performed admirably. Mr. Steve Thrash must also be thanked again for allowing us to excavate on his property and for helping to move dirt with his tractor. In the coming months, we hope to analyze the artifacts and acquire radiocarbon dates for the fantastic discoveries made on Mr. Thrash's property.



Troy University students excavating levels.



Troy Student Zhang "Lou" Yue excavating a large cooking pit



Troy student holding a piece of a large steatite bowl



Troy student Hunter Holland holding up a point

Cane Creek Iron Furnace

By Catherine C. Meyer

In August 2014, MRS Consultants, LLC revisited the Cane Creek Iron Furnace (1Ca663) on Pelham Range in Calhoun County, Alabama. The furnace site was revisited as part of a thematic mining survey that was sponsored by the Alabama Army National Guard (AL ARNG). The charcoal furnace was established around 1842 by Jacob Stroup and Noah Goode. Jacob Stroup was a renowned pioneer furnace builder and ironmaster.

Cane Creek Iron Furnace was the second blast furnace built in Alabama, but was the first truly successful furnace in the state, operating for approximately 18 years. The charcoal blast furnace sat near the southern base of Brook Mountain near Cane Creek (today on Pelham Range). Brook Mountain and the surrounding area was the hub of iron ore mining activities for the furnace. The furnace functioned under several different owners throughout its tenure, and operated under at least five different names, including Cane Creek Iron Works, Hades Iron Works, Benton Iron Works, Moore and Goode Furnace, Crowe's Iron Works, and Old Polkville Furnace. During the Civil War, it provided iron to the Confederacy. On July 14, 1864, the furnace was destroyed by the Union Calvary under the command of General Lovell H. Rousseau. The furnace was never rebuilt.

The remains of the furnace were first recorded in 2005 by Chuck Burns with the AL ARNG. While the original site boundaries only included the remains of the iron furnace, Panamerican Consultants, Inc (PCI) revisited the site in 2007 to delineate the site's boundaries. PCI expanded the site boundaries to include two possible house sites and activity areas. The remains of the furnace are found on the floodplain of Cane Creek, sitting at the southern tip of a southwest-northeast trending ridge spur. The height of the furnace would have been comparable to the upland landform, because the landform would have served as a natural charging bridge to the furnace. A short wooden bridge would have connected the ridgespur to the top of the furnace so that iron ore, charcoal, and limestone could have been fed into the top of the furnace. Building a charcoal furnace so close to a natural upland landform was common, and compares with other furnaces in the region,

especially Janney Furnace and Oxford Furnace in Calhoun County, and Cornwall Furnace and Round Mountain Furnace in Cherokee County.

MRS identified the suspected remains of the furnace at the tip of the upland landform, which is hidden beneath a layer of soil, trees, and dense undergrowth. In fact, the mound of furnace remains connects onto the upland landform. Mature trees are actually growing atop the mound. The LiDAR hillshade shows an indentation at the end of the ridgespur, which may represent an area between the furnace and the upland landform that has been filled in with deposition for the past 150 years. The remains of the furnace are marked by five massive sandstone blocks, three of which lay on the southern slope of the mound. It is suspected that much of the furnace survives underneath the layer of soil and vegetation. Although the Union Calvary reportedly destroyed the furnace, it is likely that the furnace structure itself was severely damaged (not destroyed) while the charging bridge and associated facilities were burned and destroyed.

The furnace sits less than 10-15 meters to the southeast of the mill race that is recorded as 1Ca664, and is roughly 25 meters to the north of Cane Creek. A linear depression runs along the base of the

furnace, which measures roughly 5 meters in width. The surface of the linear depression and floodplain is densely overgrown in undergrowth; therefore, it is undetermined how far this depression extends through the site. The linear depression does not appear to be natural, and may represent an old roadway, tramway, pig bed, or other feature associated with the furnace. A sample of cultural materials was collected within the linear depression, including green/glassy slag (N=3), porous green/brown slag (N=1), a handmade brick fragment (N=1), and globular ferrous metal fragments (N=3).

Based on field observations by MRS, the furnace may be partially intact below the layers of soil and vegetation. The surface of the floodplain likely contains intact subsurface features and cultural materials. Features associated with facilities and activity zones for iron ore, limestone, and charcoal processing may be found along the upland landform that served as the natural charging bridge. Additional research, i.e. Phase II testing, is strongly recommended for the area surrounding the furnace. Site 1Ca663 is considered potentially eligible for the NRHP based on Criteria A, B, and D.



East-southeast view of the furnace remains



Cut sandstone block on the south slope of the furnace mound

Bioarchaeology in the Middle Tennessee River Valley

By Brandon S. Thompson

Earlier this year the University of Alabama Office of Archaeological Research in a collaborative effort with students from the University's Department of Anthropology, began analysis of nearly 1200 sets of human skeletal remains. Also known as osteological remains, these skeletons were recovered during the 1930s and 1940s during excavations by the Works Progress Administration prior to the construction of hydroelectric dams in the Middle Tennessee River Valley in north Alabama. This year's work, which examines 21 sites spanning from the Archaic into the Protohistoric period, is the first in a multiyear project to study numerous sites excavated during this time. In conjunction with the skeletal analysis, artifacts recovered during these excavations are also being examined. These efforts will provide an extensive narrative of the prehistoric populations that inhabited this area through the last several millennia.

The skeletal analysis alone has provided invaluable data on the health, lifestyles, and hardships these people endured. Demographic information, or the frequencies of men, women, and children, provides a window into how these populations were structured. Evidence of conflict, possibly through raiding activities, was observed in projectile point wounds and healed fractures. Differences in diet and nutrition between hunting and gathering groups and Mississippian populations that practiced maize-based agriculture were also recorded. Maize was softer and less abrasive than noncultivated foods, and its sugar content contributed to higher percentages of dental caries, or cavities. Mississippian reliance on maize also resulted in higher rates of iron deficiency, caused by a reduction in meat consumption, which can manifest on bone surfaces. Types of degenerative joint disease, including osteoarthritis, were also noted. These joint conditions are indicators of age, loadbearing, and repetitive physical actions an individual performed over their lifetime. Occupational wear, including grooves and notches worn into teeth from, activities like pulling cordage, were recorded at many sites. Numerous types of infections were noted from the short-lived

and quickly healed to the chronic and debilitating. Nevertheless, these individuals often lived long lives indicating that they were being cared for by those around them.

While this work is ongoing, the information it is providing on the prehistoric people who lived along the Tennessee River is already significant. How these people were interacting between themselves and other groups; how they were moving around the landscape; the types of foods they were consuming; and how they were utilizing their environment, are all questions and avenues of research this work is addressing. In combination with the continuing artifact analysis, these data will continue to explore many areas of interest about the prehistoric groups and pose questions that have yet to be asked.



Passings

John W. Cottier



The archeological community mourns the passing of Dr. John W. Cotter, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work at Auburn University. He was laid to rest with full military honors at Pine Hill Cemetery, Auburn, Alabama on July 6, 2015. Dr. Cottier received his BA in History/Sociology from Auburn in 1964, his MA in Anthropology from the University of Alabama in 1970, and his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of

Missouri in 1982. His career at Auburn began in 1976 where he served continuously as an Associate Professor from 1987 until his death in early July of this year. He, like his father, was faculty advisor to the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity at Auburn. He was an Eagle Scout and actively participated in leadership positions with the local Boy Scout troop throughout his adult life. He was a veteran of the Viet Nam war during which time he earned the rank of Captain in the U. S. Army. Dr. Cottier was a dedicated and inspirational teacher, a wonderful mentor, a meticulous researcher, and a collector of artifacts, books, and antiques. His interests were quite varied, and he was well known for various archeological projects he conducted for state and federal agencies. He and his wife of 49 years, Randy Luxenberg Cottier (also an archeologist), operated a popular antique business, Village Antiques, for the past several decades. In addition to Randy, he is survived by a sister Catherine Cottier Darby (Brooks) and sons John Milton and John Ethan. A memorial scholarship has been established in John's name. Contributions can be made C/O the John W. Cottier Memorial Scholarship for Archeology, Allocation code 60001365, Gift Processing, 317 S. College Street, Auburn, AL, 36849.

-Robert Cook

Jessica Crawford, Southeastern Region Director of The Archaeological Conservancy posted this remembrance:

We lost a dear friend here in the Southeast Region this week. On Monday, I learned that Dr. John Cottier, Associate Professor of Anthropology at Auburn University died of a heart attack in the Archaeology Lab at Auburn, which he had established. I knew him quite well, and I called him what everyone else did, "Doc."

Doc was one of my "go tos" for the Alabama/Georgia river region, and he had also become a dear friend. He was a great supporter of The Conservancy and served on the Editorial Advisory Board for our magazine. Each time I led the Native Peoples of Alabama tour, he met us at the Alabama Department of Archives and History Museum and gave a wonderful slide presentation on Alabama Archaeology and then took us back into the collections area for a special tour. Any time I asked him for information, maps, or advice, he was more than generous. He was a friend. When my father died, Doc

was one of the first people I heard from.

For years, Doc taught the field school at Auburn, and I made a point to visit his excavations each summer. He would give me a tour of the site and then have me tell his students about The Conservancy and what we do. He loved the rivers of Alabama, especially the Tallapoosa, and on one visit, I got to spend a little time kayaking with him and his students. His wife Randy is also an archaeologist and oversees their antiques business. They were a great team, in the field, on the rivers, in museums, or anywhere they went.

I could go on and on about his contribution to archaeology. There are so many. He received over two million dollars in research funds. He worked on numerous historic Creek villages, including the now destroyed Fusihatchee and Hickory Ground, he documented archaeological and cultural sites along the Old Federal Road in Alabama. He documented an antebellum slave cabin complex and excavated at Fort Mitchell (1813-1840), and the Ebert Canebrake site, a prehistoric Mississippian site.

He'd been everywhere and knew everyone. He knew all the sites on private and public land, all the collectors both good and bad, and he worked with school kids and amateur archaeologists. It was impossible to be around him and not feel his enthusiasm and passion. As soon as I saw him, he'd walk up, give me a big hug and say, "OK" really loud and proceed to tell me what we were about to go see. I was always learning when I was with him, even if we just met for lunch as I was passing through. Teaching was where he was in a class by himself. He was tough, and he pushed his students, he teased them, supported them and encouraged them. He spent more time with them than field school or courses required, because he cared so much, and they loved him for it.

Since his death, former students, have been posting photos and messages on his Facebook page, and the out-pouring has been amazing, and his wife Randy has asked that people continue to share their pictures and stories. The stories and pictures are hilarious and the expressions of sadness and appreciation for his influence in their lives is so touching. With the posts he had shared himself and those left by former students since his death, his Facebook page has become a tribute to a life in archaeology and teaching and the wonderful impact he had on so many.

One former student eloquently wrote, "But the fact is, memories are not fixed forever in bodies any more than in

buildings or meteors. They exist to fill the vessels we assign to them, and when a man like Dr. Cottier passes, all the memories, all the knowledge, all the soul, for lack of a better word, flows out into the world and fills the vessels of every person he touched. Every sharpie, every shovel, every trowel, every dollar I find because I still look at the ground wherever I walk, every smirk that wrinkles your lips when you hear someone complain about the heat, each of these holds a little piece of that spirit. So, pick it up. Put it in a little ziploc bag. Label it immediately with provenance and file it in a box with all the countless others. Then maybe someday, someone will open a box, sit down and start sorting, trying to understand the whole picture from the parts, the whole, original vessel, from the shards. That's how he taught us to rebuild the past, isn't it? How appropriate that we do the same so that we may remember him. Rest in Peace Dr. Cottier, my professor, my mentor, the last American silverback, and beloved friend."

I feel very fortunate to have known him and like all who knew him, I will miss him dearly.



FAQs about Artifact Collecting & Archaeologists

I've heard that archaeologists will take artifacts or collections and that the state or federal government will confiscate a property with an archaeological site. Is this true?

No ! (Although if you broke the law collecting the remains archaeologists are ethically required to report this to law enforcement.) If you collected the artifacts legally (on private land with permission from the landowner), archaeologists have no authority - or interest - in taking artifacts from collectors. And, neither the federal nor the state will seize private property just to protect a site. At times sites have been donated or sold, but it is a very rare situation where the federal or state government will take land to own a site.

Isn't it true that archaeologists just want artifacts or collections for themselves? Again, not true. First of all, it is unethical for archaeologists to collect personal artifacts - such collecting would pose a significant conflict of interest and archaeologists are obligated to curate all materials they recover. Artifacts belong to the landowner - whether it is the US Forest Service, your neighbor, or YOU! Archaeologists have no more interest in collecting artifacts than post office employees collect stamps. We might like to record the artifacts, but we don't want them.

Why does everything in museums just get put a box where no one ever sees it?

Museums can only display a small portion of their collections at any one time. The reasons for this are simple - exhibits cost money, and few museums are fully funded by state or local governments; in addition, not all collections are worthy of viewing! Who wants to see thousands of lithic flakes or pieces of broken pots? However those artifacts stored in museums are cared for in perpetuity and are available for research uses - something that no collector can promise about the relics in a cabinet.

Archaeologists don't get all the really good stuff at sites that are being developed - so what's wrong with going in and getting what they leave behind?

Archaeologists don't get all the "good stuff" for three primary reasons:

First, they are obligated to examine the site only in the area to be destroyed, and even then, funding only pays to recover 20-30% of the site that would be destroyed.

Second, they must research a variety of different site areas to make certain they understand the site because there are never enough funds to fully excavate, analyze and report the findings of a site. And, third, archaeologists set aside a portion of a site for future research - when advanced technologies will improve analyses (for instance, DNA, chemical analysis, etc.).

I know of a site that was excavated, so why there was never anything written about it?

Archaeologists are ethically obligated to write reports on all projects they undertake, although the lack of funds or other issues can draw the process out long after fieldwork has ended. In addition, many reports may not be available to the general public for a variety of reasons including the cost of publishing reports, concerns for protecting and preserving the remainder of unexcavated portions of the site, and privacy issues. Reports of sites or excavations on private property may be restricted under privacy laws. It is worth noting, however, that the Alabama Archaeological Society's semi-annual meetings - with non-technical presentations about site excavations and new archaeological information - are open to the public!

Member News

New Members

Jennifer Brewer, Huntsville, AL
Barbara Gamble, Huntsville, AL
Jay Grantland, Eva, AL
Charles Setterlund, Grand Forks, ND
Emman Spain, Konawa, OK
William B. Turner, Auburn, AL

Renewals

Camille Bowman, Guntersville, AL
Douglas R. Hall, McCalla, AL
Jane and Bill Mason, Birmingham, AL
Jeff McCool, Daphne, AL
University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL
David and Brenda Webb, Florence, AL

Chapter News

News from the Cullman Chapter by Robbie Camp: On June 20th, the Cullman Chapter combined a summer field trip with the annual AAS summer meeting at Moundville Archaeological Park. Matt Gage and Eugene Futato graciously shared the contents of the "special artifact room" at OAR and many of the artifacts recovered during the TVA excavations of the early 30's. A tour of the lab and warehouse facilities, the museum, and several presentations to the group made for a full and very rewarding day. We had great participation with 18 individuals from our chapter who made the trip. Several were first time visitors to the facilities, and they were in awe of the park, facilities, and artifacts. Our group would like to thank all those involved for making this happen for so many to enjoy. The Cullman Chapter will resume regular monthly meetings on the 3rd Thursday in September at the Cullman County Health Department Community Meeting Room at 7:00 pm.

Fund Balances

Education Fund: \$205.87
Mahan Fund: \$402.35
Wimberly Fund: \$283.12

AAS Chapters 2015 Chapter Presidents

Troy: Jason Mann
jmann@troy.edu

Cullman: Robbie Camp
robbie@alabamaprinting.com

East Alabama: Teresa Paglione
tlpaglione@gmail.com

Muscle Shoals: Gerald Hester
GeraldRH@aol.com

Huntsville: Ben Hoksbergen
benhoksbergen@gmail.com

Southwest Chapter: Bonnie Gums
bgums@southalabama.edu

Coosa Valley: Phillip Koerper
pkoerper@jsu.edu

Join or Renew Today!

You can pay AAS membership dues or make donations to AAS online at
www.alabamaarchaeology.org

Or, send a check made out to
"Alabama Archaeological Society"

to

Alabama Archaeological Society
13075 Moundville Archaeological Park
Moundville, AL 35474

DUES

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	\$50.00	\$55.00
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

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; 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 1st. 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 Hunter Johnson, Hunter@TVAResearch.com, or Hunter Johnson, Tennessee Valley Archaeological Research, 2211 Seminole Drive, Suite 302, Huntsville, AL 35805

Additional details are available on the AAS website at:

www.alabamaarchaeology.org/aasgrants

Stones & Bones

Editor: Ben Hoksbergen; Assistant Editors: Teresa Paglione and Jason Mann

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

benhoksbergen@gmail.com

or via U.S. mail to:

Ben Hoksbergen
3699 US Hwy. 72
Paint Rock, AL 35764

Alabama Archaeological Society

President: Erin Phillips, erinalaarch@gmail.com

1st Vice President: Hunter Johnson, hunter@tvaresearch.com

2nd Vice President: Van King, melvanmd@hopper.net

Secretary: Heather Puckett, heather.r.puckett@gmail.com

Treasurer: Eugene Futato, efutato@bama.ua.edu

Assistant Treasurer: Brandon Thompson, branthompson@hotmail.com

Journal of Alabama Archaeology Editor: Keith Little, keith@tvaresearch.com

Journal Editorial Assistants: Ashley Dumas, adumas@uwa.edu; Matt Gage, mdgage@alan.ua.edu; Scott Meeks, scott@tvaresearch.com

Stones & Bones Editor: Ben Hoksbergen, benhoksbergen@gmail.com

Stones & Bones Assistant Editors: Teresa Paglione, tlpaglione@gmail.com; Jason Mann, jmann@troy.edu

Web Editor and Photo Archivist: Duke Beasley, vrbeasle@ua.edu

AHC Representative: Craig Sheldon, csheldon@aum.edu

Board of Directors:

Terms expire 2016:

Matt Gage, mdgage@alan.ua.edu

Margaret Russell, srussell@eufaula.rr.com

John Van Valkenberg, joycevan@knology.net

Terms expire 2017:

Van King, melvanmd@hopper.net

Kimberly Pyszka, kpyszka@aum.edu

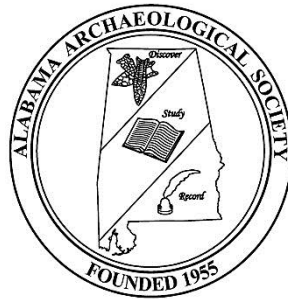
Steven Meredith, mered003@bama.ua.edu

Terms expire 2018:

David Johnson, johnsdatt@gmail.com

John Hall, jhall@uwa.edu

Cathy Meyer, cathy.mrsconsultants@yahoo.com



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Alabama Archaeological Society
3699 US Highway 72
Palm Rock, Alabama 35764

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NEWSLETTER