

Alabama Archaeological Society

NADB DOC # - 4,056,899

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STONES & BONES NEWSLETTER

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Volume 32

MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

Number 2

COOSA RIVER BANK EROSION PROJECT RECEIVES \$1 MILLION

Congress has appropriated \$1 million for a preservation-related erosion control project at Fort Toulouse-Jackson in Wetumpka. President Bush signed the Energy and Waste Appropriations Bill, Public Law 101-01, on September 29, 1989.

The site at Fort Toulouse-Jackson has been eroding for centuries. The first French fort built in 1717 overlooking the river was partially washed away by 1749. The fort was moved 100 feet south and rebuilt by 1751. Wearing away of the bank has accelerated since 1979.

The Coosa River bank stabilization plan, formulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, includes reinforcing 1,100 feet of riverbank with stone and constructing a 700-foot stone dike.

The plan also calls for the construction of a low level levee on the top of the bank to direct rainfall or receding high water from the top edge of the bank.

Investigative work by the Corps on the stabilization began in 1970 with the first report being prepared in 1972. Also included in the bill is a similar erosion control project at Mound State Monument in Moundville, which is owned by The University of Alabama.

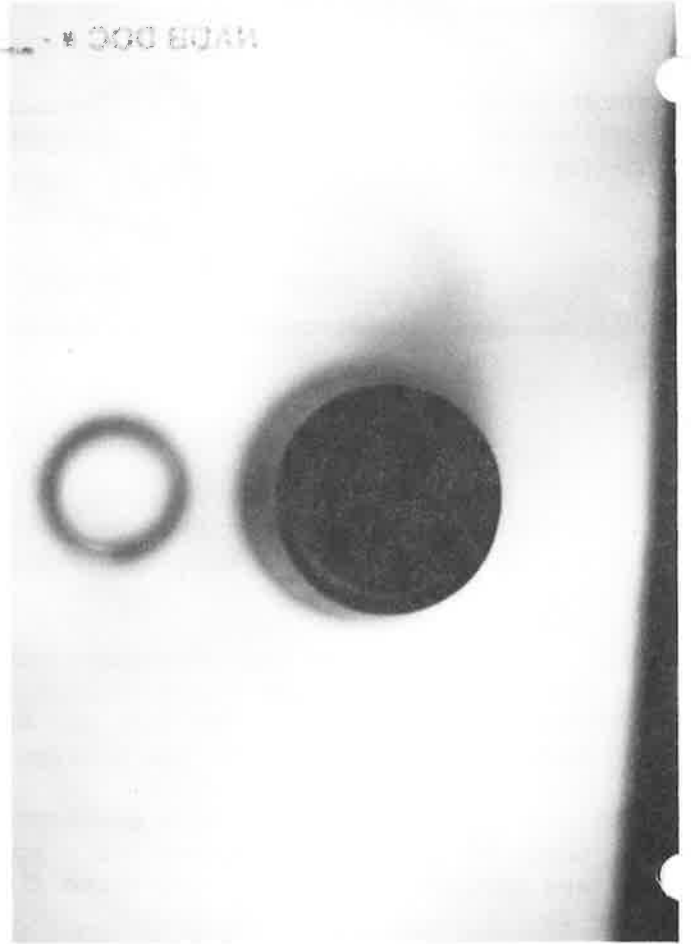
(From "The Preservation Report", Publication of the Alabama Historical Commission, Vol. 17, No. 1, January/February 1990)

CANNON FROM CHEROKEE COUNTY

The hand-held cannon depicted on the following page is reported to have been found in Cherokee County near the Coosa River in 1974. The cannon is now in the possession of Harold Moore of Attalla. It is in remarkably good condition - showing little or no pitting and no encrustation or pits expected from an iron artifact being in the ground for a long period of time. It probably weighs about 10 pounds, is 7 inches long, 3-1/2 inches in diameter at the large end, and 2-1/4 inches in diameter at the muzzle. Its smooth bore is about 35 mm. A brass ring was found, but is now detached.

Cannon, as with gunpowder, came from the east and seems to have first been encountered by Europeans during the Crusades. Cannon were known to exist in Spain as early as 1247 and are more frequent in the 14th century.

February 1990



The first iron ball shot is mentioned in 1391. These early cannon were small and usually made from wrought iron. By the 15th century they were larger and now appeared mounted on wheels or carts. The type cannon depicted here was called a "hand gonne" and appeared in the 14th century. Hogg describes the hand gonne - "They appear to have consisted of a wooden stave some three feet long to which a cast bronze or iron barrel was fixed by iron bands. The barrel varied in length from one to three feet, and the smooth bore was from a half to 1-1/2 inches in calibre. A vent or touch hole was drilled through the metal at the rear end of the bore. To fire, the hand gonne was charged with a quantity of powder and a ball or handful of stones or small shot. Powder was then sprinkled in the vent, and the weapon grasped by its stave, tucking the stave under the arm. A hot iron was then applied to the vent to ignite the priming powder, and this flashed down the vent and into the chamber to ignite the propelling charge of powder and thus discharge the shot." These guns were used by mounted horsemen also. In the 15th century they appeared with a hook cast as part of the barrel and could be used to hook onto something solid and help absorb the recoil. These were known as "hakenbuchse" - "hook" in old German - which was gradually corrupted to "harquebus" or "arquebus".

The question has been raised that perhaps this was an artifact left behind by the DeSoto expedition. However, this seems unlikely due to the condition of the artifact. DeSoto did have a cannon which he left behind at Ocute, which was in South Central Georgia, probably on the Altamaha River or the Ocmulgee. Only de la Vega leaves an account of this - "We have not mentioned previously a piece of ordnance which the Governor carried in his Army.... Having observed that this weapon served only as a burden and an affliction, and that both men and mules had to be employed for its care and transportation, the Adelantado decided to let it remain in the protection of the Curaca Cofa. And in order to demonstrate just what he was leaving him, he ordered the piece to be aimed from the Cacique's very house toward a large and exceedingly beautiful live oak growing outside the town. Then much to the surprise of both the chieftain and his people, the whole tree was destroyed with two shots."

The cannon described by de la Vega appears to be large and heavy enough to require a mule to transport it, and quite powerful to destroy a large oak in two shots. This description does not fit the "hand gonne" pictured on the accompanying page.

The artifact appears to be authentic and in good condition, but its time and place in history remain a mystery.

References:

- 1951. Varner, John. The Florida of the Inca, by Garcilaso de la Vega.
- ND. Hogg, Ian V. The Complete Illustrated Encyclopedia of the World's Firearms.
- 1953. Colliers Encyclopedia, Volume 2.

CHAPTER NEWS

Cullman Chapter

We had a good get-together at Ron Morrow's house for our December meeting. Good food and conversation made for an enjoyable time. Our January program was given by Dr. Jim Knight, archaeologist at The University of Alabama. He spoke on the possible route of DeSoto and evidence to prove an early Spanish exploration. We meet the third Monday night of each month at the Cullman County Courthouse at 7:30 p.m.

Howard King

East Alabama Chapter

The program for our November meeting was a slide-lecture by Baker Dean on the Indian history pertaining to our area. For December, Dr. John Cottier, Archaeologist, Auburn University, discussed his personal experiences in excavating Mayan ruins at the Dzibilchaltum site in the northern Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. At our January meeting, Frank T. Schnell, Archaeologist, Columbus Museum; Columbus, Georgia; was the speaker. He presented a program on the early history and archaeological points of interest in the Lower Chattahoochee River Basin along the Alabama-Georgia border. He has been involved in archaeological excavations of mounds and other sites in this area for many years.

The speaker for February 14 will be Dr. Jim Dawsey, of the Religion Department, Auburn University, who will discuss the "Impact of Archaeology on the Bible".

Our officers for this fiscal year are Garry Mullen, President; Caroline Dean, Secretary-Treasurer; and John Cottier, Program Chairman. We meet at 7 p.m. the second Wednesday of each month in the Alabama Power Company meeting room (230 N. Gay Street), Auburn. Visitors are welcome.

Caroline R. Dean

Huntsville Chapter

Charles Moore of the Muscle Shoals Chapter is scheduled to be the speaker at the January chapter meeting, which will be held on Monday, January 29. Charles' topic will be "Indian Quarry Sites".

The Huntsville Chapter meets once a month at 7 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Public Library on St. Clair Avenue. The January meeting had to be moved to the 29th because of a scheduling conflict with the library. The February and March meetings will be on our regular schedule of the fourth Tuesday; in April we will again change our meeting night - to the 25th rather than the 24th. In May we will be back on schedule.

Our February program, "Wheeler Reservoir, Guntersville to Pickwick", will be presented by Charles Hubbert, archaeologist and member of the Huntsville Chapter. In March we will hear Larry Bean on Russell Cave. Bart Henson will speak on Petroglyphs at our April meeting.

Dorothy Luke

Muscle Shoals Chapter

The Muscle Shoals Chapter held its December meeting on the 11th at the Indian Mound Museum. In spite of a sleet and snow forecast, 15 members and guests attended. We were served delicious punch, cookies, pies and cakes provided by the chapter members.

Charles Moore gave a paper on lithic materials and quarry sites. He also showed slides and examples from the Flint Ridge, Alibates, Fort Payne, and Lost Quarry sites, and discussed several other aboriginal sources of materials.

Charles Moore

SAA STATEMENT CONCERNING THE TREATMENT OF HUMAN REMAINS

Archaeologists are committed to understanding and communicating the richness of the cultural heritage of humanity, and they acknowledge and respect the diversity of beliefs about, and interests in, the past and its material remains.

It is the ethical responsibility of archaeologists "to advocate and to aid in the conservation of archaeological data", as specified in the Bylaws of the Society for American Archaeology. Mortuary evidence is an integral part of the archaeological record of the past culture and behavior in that it informs directly upon social structure and organization.

The Society for American Archaeology recognizes both scientific and traditional interests in human remains. Human skeletal material must at all times be treated with dignity and respect. Commercial exploitation of ancient human remains is abhorrent.

The Society for American Archaeology opposes universal or indiscriminate reburial of human remains, either from ongoing excavations or from extant collections. Conflicting claims concerning the proper treatment and disposition of particular human remains must be resolved on a case-by-case basis through consideration of the scientific importance of the material, the cultural and religious values of the interested individuals or groups, and the strength of their relationship to the remains in question.

Because controversies involving the treatment of human remains cannot properly be resolved nation-wide in a uniform way, the Society opposes any federal legislation that seeks to impose a uniform standard for determining the disposition of all human remains.

Recognizing the diversity of potential legal interests in the material record of the human past, archaeologists have a professional responsibility to seek to ensure that laws governing that record are consistent with the objectives, principles, and formal statements of the Society for American Archaeology.

(From "Bulletin of the Society for American Archaeology", November 1989)

Stevenson Railroad Depot Museum

The restored Stevenson Depot and Depot Museum bring back memories of the area's past with displays of archaeological materials, Civil War artifacts, tools from early American farms and, of course, items of railroading history.

Nearby, are the locations of several Civil War redoubts and fortifications, erected by Federal occupation forces to protect the vital railroad link intersections at Stevenson, which were the means for supplying federal troops in the Southeast. Particularly noteworthy is Fort Harker, which can be seen from the museum. This was built in the early years of the war and is being restored.

The museum is easy to find, located in the center of downtown Stevenson, and obviously on the railroad. The museum is usually open from April 1 until Christmas, excluding Sundays. According to Museum Director Patsy Rudder Jones, the museum will be open year round beginning April 1, 1990.

Director Jones, a pleasant and energetic person and Stevensonian by birth, warmly shares her knowledge of the exhibits with visitors. Many of the artifacts, which comprise the museum's archaeological collection, came from fields and mounds on her father's property on the Tennessee River.

These materials were professionally excavated and are exhibited via a cooperative arrangement with the Alabama Museum of Natural History.



Some examples include:

Iron Artifacts
Galena Sample
Human Effigy Water Bottle
Copper Beads
Copper Bells
Conch Shell Ear Pin
Twin Turkey Cock Gorget
Woodpecker Gorget with Cross
and Sun Circle Design

Effigy of a Dog (Ceramic)
Polled Celts of Varying Sizes
Copper Arm Bands
Miniature Copper Animal Forms
Copper Bracelet
Woodpecker Gorget (Large & Small)
Cut-Out Cross Gorget
Various Pottery Vessels
Strung Shells

MUSEUM INFORMATION

Hours 1:30 - 4:30 pm, Daily Except Sunday

Telephone 205-437-2334

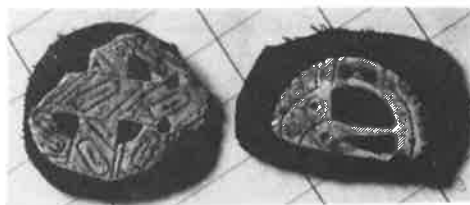
Visitors Approximately 29,000 in 1989

No Admission Charged Donations Welcome

For Sale Local History Books

Director Patsy Rudder Jones

Archaeological Exhibits: Superb Examples of local artifacts from the Early Archaic through the Mississippian periods.



PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

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