

Alabama Archaeological Society

Stones & Bones

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1999 Annual Winter Meeting

The 1999 Annual Winter meeting of the Alabama Archaeological Society was held at the Selma Performing Arts Center on December 11th. The meeting, sponsored by the Alabama Historical Commission and Old Cahawba Park, included an excellent program. Several artifact collections were on display and Reed Stowe brought a large sample of Weeden Island pottery sherds from a Late Woodland site he is working on at Navy Cove on the Fort Morgan peninsula. Reed's collection allowed members the opportunity to physically handle the sherds.

The keynote speaker at this year's meeting was Dr. Amy Young, a historical archaeologist from the University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. Young spoke to the society about "African-American Archaeology in the Deep South." Her presentation began with a plantation site in Kentucky and concluded with a discussion of the archaeology of slave cabin sites in southern Mississippi. Dr. Young is a very enthusiastic speaker and we thank her for a very informative and enjoyable presentation.

The highlight of the General Business Meeting was the election of new officers and Board members. Our new President is Van King, 1st

Vice President is Gary Mullen, 2nd Vice President is Judith Knight, Secretary is Linda Derry, and Treasurer is Eugene Futato (for a full listing of all our officers and Board Members see page 18 of this news letter).

A special event this year was the very first presentation of the newly created Milt and Bea Harris Outstanding Service Award given to Mr. Jim Lee. Congratulations Jim and thanks for all your hard work and dedication.

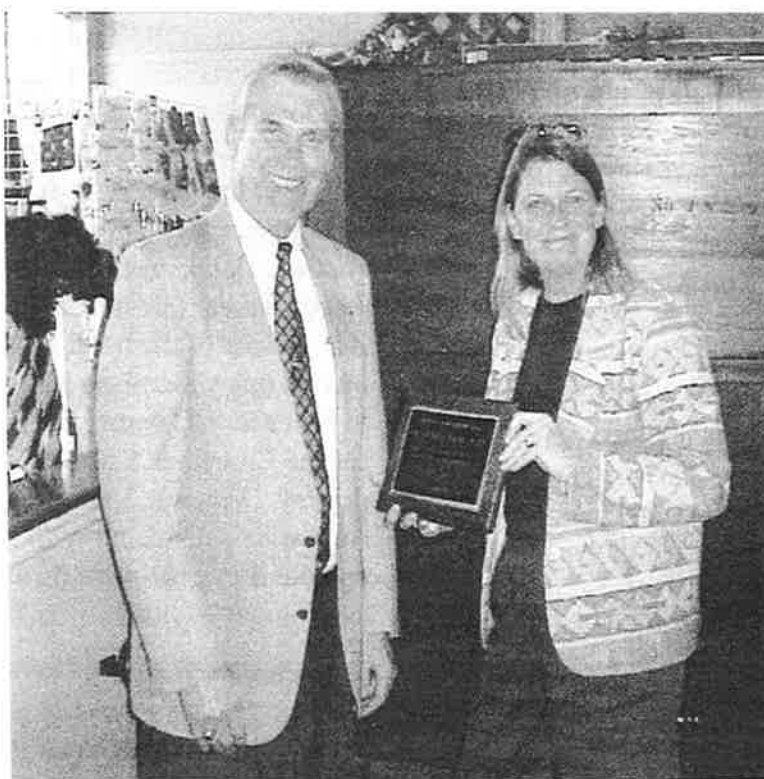
After the meeting was adjourned, the attendees made their way to the recently restored St. James Historic Hotel, an early 19th century establishment that hosted the likes of Jesse James. After a tour of the hotel given by the present owner, many members retired to the dinning room to eat or to the "watering hole" to relax until time for the Christmas River Parade and fireworks display. This was a real treat! The boats on the river were decked out with a fantastic light display and the fireworks were brilliant.

Visit the AAS Web Page:

<http://www.gulfmart.com/org/aas.htm>



The new 2000 AAS officers (from left to right): Linda Derry (Sec.), Judith Knight (2nd V.P.), Van King (Pres.), Eugene Futato (Treas.).



Judith Knight presenting Mr. Jim Lee with the newly created Milt and Bea Harris Outstanding Service Award.

We would like to thank the members of the 1999 Planning Committee, Julie Lyons, Judith Knight, Bill Fowler, Linda Derry, and Tommy Coleman for a job well done. We would also like to extend our appreciation to Jim Lee for an excellent book auction. Our attendees got some great books at some great prices.

*Presentations given at this year's annual meeting:

New Mapping Tools for Archaeological Sites
by Daphne Battle

The Archaeological Conservancy in the Southeast by Alan Gruber

Lithic Raw Material Availability at Poverty Point by Phil Carr

Archaeology and the Alabama Historical Commission by Craig Sheldon

Preliminary Results of the 1999 Black Warrior Survey by Scott Hammerstead, recipient of the 1999 Wimberly Scholarship Fund and the Mahan Research Grant

Alabama Roack Art, An Update by Bart Henson

The Late Woodland Period on the N. Central Gulf Coast by Read Stowe

Sandstone Artifacts at the Pride Place Excavations by Jeff Sherard

Unsolved Mysteries in Alabama Archaeology by Jim Knight

African-American Archaeology in the Deep South, keynote address by Dr. Amy Young, University of Southern Mississippi

Submitted by the Editor.

Looking into the AAS's Past

With the new millennium upon us, it is natural that our attention turn to the future. Our Society's leadership has set a growth in membership and a greater emphasis on public education as our goals for the future. These efforts should bring to our organization a new generation of members. Many

of these new members, however, will not have an understanding of the history behind our Society. At the Fall Board of Directors meeting, this was discussed at length. The Board decided that during the year 2000, the *Stones & Bones* should publish articles about our past as well as biographical information on the founding members of the Society. In this issue, the first of the new millennium, the editor elected to publish a history of the Society written in 1977. To our knowledge, this article has never been published and in fact, we are not even sure who wrote it. It has been in the editor's files for over ten years. It will surely bring back memories to our older members and will enlighten our new members. In another issue this year we plan to include a second article about our past from 1977 to the present.

In the March/April issue we will begin a series on significant individuals in our past. David L. DeJarnette will be the subject of our first article. We hope that this series will inspire our older members to submit articles about other founding members.

The editors hope you enjoy the biographical series as well as the articles about our past. We welcome your comments and we want to encourage submissions of articles from you, our members.

Submitted by: the Editor

History of the Alabama Archaeological Society 1954-1976

During the fall of 1954, a number of employees of the Chemstrand Corporation of Decatur, Alabama, discovered they had more in common than their employer...a strong interest in archaeology. Dr. Frank Soday, the only original member with an archaeological background, began holding impromptu "mini-lectures" in the Chemstrand Library. Soon these meetings

became a regular feature, and so on December 21, 1954 an organizational meeting was held to establish the Alabama Archaeological Society (shortly the name was changed to the Decatur Chapter when it became obvious that this interest in archaeology was not as localized as first thought). The first meetings were held at various members' homes, with the usual speaker being Dr. Soday, the first president.

As the interest of the members continued to grow--so did the group's reputation, and on May 2, 1955, the Morgan-Limestone Chapter of the Alabama Archaeological Society was formed. Out of a firm desire to spread knowledge of archaeology to other interested parties around the state, A.B. "Chic" Craig assumed, or was "volunteered" for the job as Editor of the *Journal of Alabama Archaeology*.

On January 14, 1956, the Madison County Chapter (now known as the Huntsville Chapter) joined the ranks of organized amateur archaeologists, thus meaning a large portion of extreme northern Alabama was becoming involved in the acquisition and diffusion of archaeological information.

A similar group of interested amateurs had been meeting since 1929 in the Birmingham area under the name of the Birmingham Anthropological Society. An interest in the establishment of a monthly newsletter had been repeatedly discussed but the necessary funds never materialized. Alice DeLamar, a friend of Dan Josselyn and a first class fairy godmother for Alabama Archaeology, came to the rescue and in 1956 "The Birmingham Inquirer" began publishing archaeological information for interested amateurs around the state. Martin Hollander was the first editor of "The Birmingham Inquirer" followed by Britt Thompson and Emil Dahlen, then Dan Josselyn, the original "town crier" of Alabama Archaeology, assumed the editorship and lit a raging fire under the Birmingham Anthropological Society members and created great interest in statewide archaeological investigations.

In the 1957 the newsletter name was changed to "Stones and Bones" and an additional public relations push was initiated by Britt Thompson, the second president of the Alabama Archaeological Society, in the form of the "Stones and Bones" Television Show, of which Britt was weekly host and producer for five years. Most of the chapters which joined after the initiation of the "Stones and Bones" Television Show did so primarily because of the interest created in Alabama Archaeology due to the sincere interest and tremendous amount of work and self-sacrifice displayed by Britt in the production of this show.

The spread of archaeological information, through both the television show and three publications authored by Dan Josselyn and produced by Britt Thompson, entitled "The Archaeological Story of Alabama Indians," "Archaeological Primer," and "Projectile Point Primer" (produced for television give-aways), resulted in the addition of two chapters during 1958, the Muscle Shoals Chapter in March and the official affiliation of the Birmingham Anthropological Society on November 14, 1958. Thus in less than four years the Alabama Archaeological Society had five chapters (all joining as a result of personal contact of people already interested in archaeology), a regular journal and a monthly news letter, as well as a weekly television show. As Dan Josselyn so eloquently put it, the "twisting of the slender threads into a strong rope" commenced.

Two additional chapters joined in 1960, Marshall County in June and East Alabama in November. That year also witnessed the formation of the Archaeological Research Association of Alabama, Inc., under the able leadership of James H. McCary, II. Initiated specifically for the purpose of obtaining funds to excavate a test trench which was followed by an archaeological excavation at the recently discovered Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter, this group was through the years a major factor in the acquisition of Alabama archaeological data. While entirely separate from the Alabama Archaeological Society, it was considered the major financial arm of the Society.

The Tuscaloosa and Mauvilla chapters joined the society in 1961, bringing the chapter total to nine and increasing the spread of archaeological interest through the west central and southern portions of the state. During this year Dan Josselyn formally retired as editor of the newsletter and was succeeded by Britt Thompson. However, since the word "rest" wasn't included in Dan's vocabulary, he continued to be the major newsletter contributor and most vocal supporter of Alabama Archaeology. After six years as editor of the *Journal of Alabama Archaeology*, A.B. Craig turned the position over to David L. DeJarnette, who, as a professional archaeologist affiliated with the University of Alabama, gave added respectability to the Alabama Archaeological Society with archaeologist throughout the country. A large increase in the number of our membership of professional archaeologists, institutions and libraries has been attributed to the improved *Journal*.

The first Archaeological Research Association sponsored excavations occurred in 1961 with the investigations of the Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter, under the direction of David L. DeJarnette. This has been described as "our first opportunity to combine the efforts of professional and amateur archaeologists in Alabama." The excavation report comprised both issues of the 1962 *Journal of Alabama Archaeology*, and is still widely proclaimed in archaeological circles for the fine work and valuable data recovered through this spirit of professional/amateur cooperation. Additional Stanfield-Worley Bluff Shelter excavations were conducted in 1963.

The Selma Chapter joined the Alabama Archaeological Society in April of 1964, which brought in amateurs from the central portion of the state. Because of the fine contributions of interested amateurs and civic-minded companies, the Archaeological Research Association was able to sponsor excavations on Sand Mountain and publish the *Handbook of Alabama Archaeology, Part I, Point Types*, by James W. Cambron and David C. Hulse, during 1964.

By 1965 the success of Part I was so overwhelming that an additional printing was

required, accompanied by the publication of the Pebble Tool Papers, authored by Matt Lively, A.G. Long and Dan Josselyn.

The continued growth and interest around the state was exhibited in 1966 by the addition of the Choctawhatchee Chapter. The Eastern States Archaeological Federation reported during that year that the Alabama Archaeological Society was its fourth largest affiliated member. The Archaeological Research Association, through the continued fine financial support of the Society members, sponsored surveys in Dekalb, Lamar, Franklin, Fayette, and Marion counties during the years 1965 and 1966 which added invaluable archaeological site information to the statewide system housed at Mound State Monument. These surveys resulted in archaeological excavations in Franklin County from 1967 through 1969, which continued the influx of archaeological data contributed through the cooperation of interested amateur archaeologists. Since this information remains permanently on file, it is of continuing value to current researchers.

The year 1967 saw the publication of Part II of the *Handbook of Alabama Archaeology, Uniface Blade and Flake Tools*, again authored by James W. Cambron and David C. Hulse, and the Cullman County Chapter became our 12th chapter. Additionally, the Pastfinders requested and was granted membership as the women's auxiliary of the Birmingham Anthropological Society. While not fitting the definition of a chapter, the hard work of these Birmingham ladies benefited the society in numerous ways, and they were a most welcome addition to the Society. In May of 1968, our chapter number was increased to 13 by the addition of the Choccolocco Chapter of Anniston, Alabama.

Still another printing of Part I of the Handbook was found necessary in 1969 because of the increasing demand for the contained information by both amateurs and professionals who learned of its existence primarily through the publications of the Alabama Archaeological Society.

The hard work of Dan Josselyn, David L. DeJarnette and the Society at large brought about

another milestone in Alabama Archaeology in 1970, when Dr. Francois Bordes, noted Paleontologist and author, visited our state to view Alabama pebble tools and to study them in the company of Don Dragoo (Carnegie) and Steve B. Wimberly. The existence of these pebble tools, researched through the combined efforts of Alabama amateurs and professionals, was brought to the attention of Dr. L.S.B. Leakey by David L. DeJarnette, who was told they could easily have been found in Oldavai Gorge.

The Archaeological Research Association continued its sponsorship of archaeological investigations around the state with the funding of the Durants Bend Excavations in 1970.

Because of the combined efforts of all the members of the Alabama Archaeological Society and their fine cooperation and support of the Archaeological Research Association, the Distinguished Service Award of the Alabama Historical Commission was given the Society in 1971.

Excavations at the LeGrange Bluff Shelter, again funded by the Alabama Archaeological Research Association through the contributions of Alabama Archaeological Society members and interested parties, were conducted in 1972 and again in 1975. The report of the 1975 excavations at LeGrange appeared in the June 1976 issue of the *Journal of Alabama Archaeology*. The continuing desire to disseminate information about Alabama Archaeology resulted in the publication of the *First Ten Years of the Journal of Alabama Archaeology* in 1973 and *Special Publication Number 1, Fort Mitchell* in 1974. Continued archaeological data recovery required the revision and up-dating of *Part I* of the Handbook in 1975 and the depletion of the *Part II, Uniface Blade and Flake Tools* required its reprinting in 1976.

During 1976, the Archaeological Research Association, with joint sponsorship of the Alabama Historical Commission and the University of Alabama Department of Anthropology sponsored a Late Pleistocene Survey of the southern half of Alabama.

In the first 22 years, the Alabama Archaeological Society grew from a handful of interested friends in Decatur, Alabama, to a group of over 800 members in 43 states and five foreign countries. The accomplishments were numerous and the fine spirit of cooperation and partnership of our members netted the Alabama Archaeological Society one of the finest reputations in the Southeastern United States.

Speaker's Bureau

The following individuals have volunteered to present programs on a variety of topics at Chapter meetings. Please contact them directly. It is expected that more will be announced in future newsletters. Beginning with the next issue, the *Stones & Bones* will begin including a biographical sketch of the speakers in order that the Chapters will be knowledgeable of their individual research interests and archaeological experiences.

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Historic Creek Indians; archaeology of the historic Creek Indians; archaeology of the Lower Tallapoosa Valley; preserving your collection.

Hunter B. Johnson

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Mississippian settlement and social organization; Pride Place (1Tu1); Middle Woodland Copena, Flat-top mounds; Lower Mississippian archaeology; Plaquemine culture.

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Alabama Coastal Plain archaeology; prehistory of Alabama; Southwestern archaeology; Mesoamerican archaeology (travel restricted to SE or Central Alabama on weeknights because of teaching schedule)

Bruce D. Bizzoco

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Birmingham, AL 35213

Home 205-425-0222

Office 205-391-2966

Bizzoco@bellsouth.net

General archaeology; frauds, myths, and fantastic archaeology (the pseudoscience of archaeology); epistemology; Charles Darwin and evolution; Classical fencing, history of armor (weapons)

Joe Watkins

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Maya sites of Palenque, Yaxchilan, Bonampak, Uxmal, Chichen Itza; lifestyles of the Lacandonas of Chiapas, Mexico, in the 1960's.

Larry Beane

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Russell Cave/Little River archaeology; tools and weapons demonstrations; flintknapping (travel restricted to NE Alabama, Birmingham north to Hunstville and points east)

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archaeology; Mississippian art and
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Core drilling techniques

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Middle Archaic hunter-gatherers; Great Basin
archaeology; lithic analysis; cultural resource
management

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Bottle Creek archaeology; the personal side of
field work; mounds of the Mississippi Valley;
archaeology in Russia; studying salt in China;
The Indian in Art; Romance and Reality

In addition: The Alabama Humanities
Foundation has an extensive Speakers list. Visit
their website at www.Bham.net/ahf or call
205-930-0540 for a complete list of speakers and
topics.

AAS Chapter News

The **East Alabama Chapter** of the Alabama
Archaeological Society met Tuesday, November
9, 1999 at 7:00 p.m. in Auburn. John Ross, a
resident of Opelika, Alabama, presented a slide
program on Beans Mill, located on Halawaka
Creek about 8 miles east of Opelika on U.S.
Highway 29. The mill, originally built in
1874-75, is listed in the Alabama Register of
Landmarks and Heritage. Mr. Ross recounted the
mill's history, restorations efforts to date, and
recent archaeological evidence revealing the
nature and construction of the original timber dam
that was destroyed by the flood of 1874.

The **Coosa Valley Chapter** of the Alabama Archaeological Society met on September 23, 1999 at 7:00p.m. on the Jacksonville State University Campus. Nominations and elections were held for the year: Dr. Phillip E. Koerper (President); Mr. Chris Hill (1st V.P.); Mr. Wyatt Amos (2nd V.P.); Mrs. Linda Frazier (Sec./Treas.); Mr. Larry Smith (Newsletter Editor). The program was a slide-lecture report on the JSU field schools and summer excavations by Dr. Harry O. Holstein.

The next meeting of the **Coosa Valley Chapter** was held on October 21, 1999, at 7:00p.m. on the Jacksonville State University Campus. The program was a slide-lecture presentation on Syria by Dr. Thomas Baucom of the JSU Physical and Earth Sciences Department.

Information on future meetings of the **Coosa Valley Chapter** can be obtained from Dr. Koerper at 782-5604 or Dr. Holstein at 782-5656.

The **Troy State Chapter** met on December 6th to discuss a group trip to the AAS winter meeting in Selma. The Chapter also agreed to sponsor chapter member Rachael Jordan in the Miss TSU Pageant. Rachael's platform will be the value of teaching school children about archaeology and Alabama's prehistory. Rachael has been very active in the Troy State Archaeological Research Center's Kids-N-Digs/Teachers-N-Digs program and is currently working on a southeastern prehistory coloring book for elementary school children.

Seven members of the **Troy State Chapter** attended the annual Winter meeting in Selma on Dec. 11, 1999. For most, it was the first time they had attended the Winter meeting. A good time was had by all.



Members of the Troy State Chapter at the winter meeting (from left to right): James Thomas (Pres.), Anderson Brooms, Samantha Wolfe (Treas., Stones & Bones Assoc. Editor), Terri Jackson (V.P.), Butch Beste, and Brady Newman.

Thank You

The staff here at *Stones & Bones* would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to Mr. Steve Waddail of TSU Quick Copy. Steve is the person who prints each edition of *Stones & Bones* for us. Over the years, and particularly this year with the new format, he has done his best to make sure that *Stones & Bones* looks its best. Thank you Steve, your help is greatly appreciated.

Book Review

“Traces of the Past: Unraveling the Secrets of Archaeology Through Chemistry”

By Joseph B. Lambert

1997, Addison-Wesley

This book, written by a chemistry professor at Northwestern University, surveys the broad interface between archaeology and the many high-tech devices and procedures that are now being used to examine and interpret artifactual evidence. Using a plain and simple writing style that any layman can follow, the author delineates, for example, how stone artifacts are being traced back to their original quarry sites through their trace-metal contents, how investigators are deducing the strategies used by prehistoric potters to impart different colors to ceramics, how the onset of maize cultivation in North America has been dated, and how scientists are learning to analyze ancient containers to identify the foods that were once placed in them.

The book devotes separate chapters to stone, soil, pottery, color, glass, organics, metals, and humans. Thus, it cuts a wide swath through prehistoric as well as historic archaeology, touching on artifactual materials of every description and from all points of the compass. Indeed, this is a strongly materials-oriented book, one that describes in some depth such diverse

materials as glaze, glass, papyrus, chert, gold, iron, pigments, adhesives, asphalt, pitch, parchment, dyes, clay, bronze, silk, lacquer, brass, porcelain, paper, ink, pottery, mordants, wine, beer, lime, wood, pollen, hair, and leather. In addition, the book also showcases the author's expansive knowledge of key prehistoric and historic events from around the world.

As new developments continue to push back the traditional limits of chemical-analysis techniques with respect to sensitivity and accuracy, these techniques are finding ever more frequent application to the most critical problems in modern archaeology. Perhaps mercifully, the techniques themselves appear to have received only minor attention from the author of this book. Instead, the book seems to focus mainly on the key archaeological issues, the overall investigative process that was applied to these issues, and the findings of the investigators in each of the many different examples of scientific inquiry that appear throughout the book.

Along the way, the author weaves a most compelling tale of how chemists and other scientists have managed to shed light on many of the most fundamental questions in archaeology. The author speaks from a chemist's point of view, but he does so with due regard for the limitations of the chemically challenged reader. Thus, I heartily recommend this book to anyone with a broad, abiding interest in artifacts of all kinds. This book explains, in the simplest of terms, how artifacts of every description have yielded up their secrets to chemical sleuths armed with microscopes, spectrometers, chromatographs, and other wonders of our technological age.

Contributed by Bill Fowler, Birmingham
Chapter

Mystery Artifact of Wood

Mr. Aljerald Powers of Oldfield, Talladega County, Alabama brings to our attention this unusual paddle-like artifact of carved wood. It is

about 21 inches long and 9 inches wide, perhaps broken off. The relatively thin and broad blade has a notched outline. The piece was unearthed by Mr. Powers from the stream bed of Crooked Creek, a small tributary of Tallasseeatche Creek, just east of Sylacauga, in which it lay partly exposed when found. The Alabama State Site Files record several archaeological sites along Crooked Creek in this vicinity, some of which have historic Creek Indian components. It is uncertain whether this artifact is actually of Native American Indian origin or is of a more recent age. Mr. Powers is, however, a local authority on early non-Indian settlement of this area and knows of no historic era tool matching this description. Unless it is actually the blade end of a canoe paddle, I am at a loss as well. Perhaps someone has seen a similar item and can enlighten us. The specimen now resides in Mr. Power's collection. We are grateful to Vincas Steponaitis for the photograph.

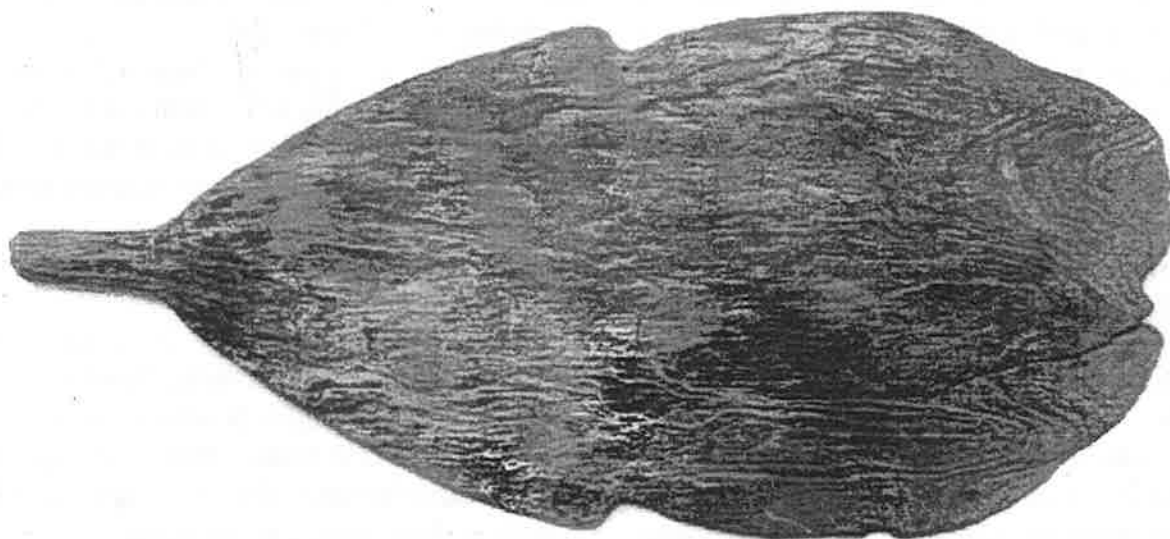
Submitted by:

Vernon James Knight, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Alabama, Box 870210 Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0210.

If you have any information about this artifact, please write the previous address, or call (205)348-5947.

First North American Natives May Have Come From Europe

In a radical new view of pre-history, two prominent archaeologists said North America's first inhabitants may have crossed the icy Atlantic



Wooden paddle-like artifact unearthed by Mr. Powers from the stream bed of Crooked Creek, a small tributary of Tallasseeatche Creek, just east of Sylacauga.

Ocean some 18,000 years ago from Europe's Iberian Peninsula.

The theory, presented at a weekend conference, is at odds with the long-held notion the continent's first settlers came across a land bridge from Asia.

The conventional view is the stuff of college entrance exams and Far Side cartoons-wandering cavemen wrapped in animal hides and lugging enormous spears, crossing the land bridge from Asia to hunt woolly mammoths.

Archaeologists believe nomads made their way into Alaska and found an ice-free highway down into the continent some 13,500 years ago. Their culture has been named Clovis for their distinctive weapons that have been found in digs.

But the new theory holds the continent's first inhabitants may have crossed the Atlantic more than 18,000 years ago from the Iberian Peninsula-the area that is now Spain, Portugal and southwestern France.

Belonging to a group known as the Solutreans, these pre-modern explorers are believed to have originally settled the U.S. Eastern Seaboard, the researchers said. Over the next six millennia, their hunting and gathering culture may have spread as far as the U.S. deserts and Canadian tundra, and perhaps into South America.

The researchers, Dennis Stanford and Bruce Bradley, concede the Solutreans may not have been the only paleo-explorers to reach the Western Hemisphere.

But judging by their distinctive style of projectile points and other clues in the archaeological record, they may have been the first settlers who brought to North America what, until now, has been considered the Clovis culture.

"There is very little in Clovis, in fact, nothing that is not found in Solutrea," said Stanford, who is anthropology curator at the Smithsonian Institution.

"Their blades are virtually indistinguishable."

Stanford and Bradley, an independent researcher from Cortez, Colorado, offered their stunning reinterpretation of the standard settlement theory at an archaeology conference in Santa Fe earlier this fall.

The meeting was devoted to re-examining Clovis research seven decades after it was accepted as historical bedrock.

Other scientists said the Solutrean alternative is such a radical departure it might take years to adequately evaluate. Stanford and Bradley's new explanation, they noted, is based primarily on comparisons of projectile points and other artifacts already discovered on both sides of the Atlantic.

No unequivocal Solutrean settlement remains have been found in North America, they said.

Researchers who believe Clovis and the Bering Sea land-bridge theory is outdated point to sites at Monte Verde, Chile, as well as Pennsylvania, Virginia, and South Carolina as being settled in 12,500-16,000 B.C.

But Clovis defenders said many artifacts from those digs are so crude they may be rocks that have been broken naturally, rather than actual stone tools fashioned by prehistoric hands.

Still, observers said, the older Solutrean projectile points from Europe and the more recent Clovis points from the Americas closely resemble each other. That's what makes the new Out of Iberia theory so tantalizing.

"There is no question about it," Kent State University archaeologist Kenneth Tankersley said.

"There are only two places in the world and two times that this technology appears-Solutrean and Clovis."

How seafaring Solutreans could have arrived in North America is unknown.

Based on his knowledge of modern native cultures above the Arctic Circle, Stanford said it is not farfetched to imagine Solutreans sailing to the New World in skin boats. With a strong current and favorable weather, the trip might have taken as little as three weeks, he calculated.

By this time in pre-history, he said, South Pacific islanders had been sailing open waters for at least 20,000 years.

Taken from:

<http://www.southam.com/calgaryherald/newsnow/cpfs/world/331101/w110129.html>

Tests Show Miami Stone Circle Was Built By Natives 2,000 Years Ago

Carbon-dating tests show a large stone circle discovered at the mouth of the Miami River is a nearly 2,000-year-old trading post, apparently made by natives.

"The circle would certainly appear to be ancient, and it also seems to be the product of Native American hands," archaeologist Ryan Wheeler of the Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research said Tuesday.

A developer planned to build a \$126-million apartment complex at the downtown site but a judge ruled in June the county can take the land. Preservations and government officials said \$8.7-million more is needed to meet the developer's \$26.7-million demand for the one-hectare.

"It's not only authentic but it's a very important part of Florida's heritage," said archaeologist and project consultant Bob Carr.

Scientists dated five items from the site, including charcoal from wood fires and pieces of animal bone. No human remains have been found.

Four of the five items dated about AD 125. The fifth item, a shark vertebra, dated to the Spanish period in the mid-1600s.

The circle, actually an oval about 14 meters across, consists of a number of holes dug into limestone. The holes have been used to secure wooden poles for dwellings, or racks for drying fish.

John Ricisak, an archaeologist with the Miami-Dade County Historic Preservation Division, said members of Florida's ancient Glades culture probably used the site as a seasonal trading post.

Taken from:

<http://www.southam.com/calgaryherald/newsnow/cpfs/world/991103/w110316.html>

Mammoth Raised From The Earth

An international team has successfully airlifted a woolly mammoth from Siberia's ice-and will slowly thaw out secrets that date back more than 20,000 years. The experiment could reach its climax with an attempt to clone the long-extinct creature, a la "Jurassic Park."

The operation involved the transfer of a 24-ton hunk of permafrost from the Taimyr Peninsula excavation site to the Russian city of Khatanga. Within that hunk lies what scientists believe is a 47-year-old male mammoth weighing about 15,000 pounds.

The Russian heavy-lift helicopter seemed to strain at first when pulling the frozen block for the 200-mile airlift, said expedition leader Bernard Buigues.

"I was afraid that something happened, and after some seconds and minutes I saw it growing up from the ground," the French explorer told journalists during a teleconference. "And it became something magical. It was for me a situation when a dream became reality."

Buigues' dream began two years ago when members of the native Dolgan tribe told him that they had uncovered the tusks and partly decomposed head of the mammoth. He said ground-penetrating radar indicated that the body was intact beneath the surface of the permafrost, and a team of paleontologists was recruited to recover the specimen.

For nearly a month, workers used jackhammers and shovels to free up the concrete-like permafrost surrounding the mammoth. The temperature on the day the block was extracted was around 5 degrees Fahrenheit, but the wind chill made it feel much colder, said Dutch paleontologist Dick Mol.

Mol noted that mammoth remains have been taken from the ice many times before, but not during the Siberian winter under conditions that

could preserve the soft tissues as well as the sediments surrounding the creature.

The Cloning Scenario

Much has been made over the possibility of cloning the mammoth by injecting its DNA into a modified elephant egg, and then implanting the egg into the womb of an Asian elephant. But Buigues said "it's not realistic to speak seriously about this now."

"What we are focusing on right now is to better understand why this animal disappeared 20,000 years ago," he said.

Ultimately, paleontologists hope to learn why mammoths, which once ranged over North America and northern Europe, went extinct thousands of years ago.

Could it be brought back? Under the most optimistic circumstances, a cloned mammoth would be at least three years down the road, said Larry Agenbroad, a geologist and paleontologist at Northern Arizona University. Agenbroad said he has discussed the idea with a cryogenetics firm that is already working with elephants-and has been told that "if we can get good DNA, there will be absolutely no problem in the cloning."

Scientists at Texas A&M have reportedly cloned a steer from the hide of another that died a year earlier, but experts on cloning say it would be far more difficult to produce a live animal from genetic material that has been frozen for thousands of years.

The Reuters news service quoted Russian zoologist Alexei Tikhonov as saying that the mammoth specimen brought to Khatanga was not intact and unsuitable for cloning. But even Tikhonov said it might be possible to clone future specimens, provided that long chains of DNA could be found intact.

Shorter Term Science

The more immediate scientific task involves moving the block of permafrost into the Khaianga laboratory, which is actually an underground tunnel carved out by prisoners during the Stalin era. At mid-subfreezing temperatures, the block

will be slowly thawed out using a bank of hair dryers, Mol said. The mammoth's hair and soft tissue will be the main focus of study. But scientists also will examine the surrounding sediment and embedded plants to get a better sense of how the animal lived and died.

"We hope to find out from the internal parts what was the reason that this animal died, because it was an animal which was in the strongest part of his life," Mol said.

Agenbroad said the latest expedition pioneered "a new procedure for the permafrost regions," and Mol said the researchers plan to follow up on further finds brought to light by the Siberian natives.

Buigues estimated the cost of the expedition at \$2 million, with funding provided by the Discovery Channel. Discovery filmed the expedition and plans to air a TV documentary about the find, titled "Raising the Mammoth," worldwide on March 12, 2000.

Taken from: *MSNBC.com/*

The Mammoths Demise

The extinction of mega-fauna in the Americas has long been a controversial subject. Two theories have long prevailed, with neither having sufficient evidence to replace the other. The theory that sudden climatic changes affected the vegetation and caused the mammal's extinction some 13,000 years ago, has many supporters. During the Quaternary (1.6 million years ago to 10,000 years ago) many swings in the climate occurred, some as much as 12.6 degrees F in a decade, based on ice cores from Greenland. But few mammals became extinct during these earlier swings in temperature. However, the last ice age, the Wisconsinian glaciation in North America saw scores of large mammals become extinct about 13,000 years ago in both Americas.

The other theory has human hunters spilling over the Americas killing off the mammals as they spread across two continents. Accompanying this

theory is the combined effect of man and climate caused the extinction. One exemption to these theories is the survival of the mammoth on Wrangel Island in the Siberian Seas until 4000 years ago. The man killing theory is supported by many kill sites across North America, especially the Southwestern U.S., where projectile points have been found with mammoth and mastodon bones.

About 130 mammal species died out in the Americas as the ice age ended. The mammoth died out in Northern Eurasia about 13,000 years ago. There was also a large die out 50,000 years ago in Australia and New Guinea. Similar losses occurred in the West Indies 5000-6000 years ago. These were all large mammal species. A curious thing marks these extinctions-in most cases they occurred roughly the same time human beings first arrived at these locations that suffered the losses.

Now a new theory surfaces-as humans moved to new locations, along with them came new lethal diseases that caused death among many species. Coming with these humans was a powerful pathogen-perhaps it was the lice in their hair, fleas on rodents and wolf-dogs or something living in their gut. The mammals of the new world had no immunity to this microbe and fell in large numbers to their on slaughter. There are always a few survivors, but these are probably the ones killed off by man.

This article is extracted from a series of articles in the October 1999 "Discovering Archaeology." The introductory article is by the editors. Following articles "The Time of the Hunters," by Paul S. Martin; "The Weather Changed," by Ernest L. Lundelius and Russell Graham; and "Mammoths & Microbes," by Ross D.E. MacPhee and Preston A. Marx complete the series.

This is an outstanding summary on the current thinking of "What Happened to the Mammoth."

Submitted by: Amos J. Wright, Jr.
Huntsville Chapter

First Alphabet Found

Archaeologists have found along an old desert road in Egypt what could be the earliest known examples of alphabetic writing, the New York Times reported.

The Semitic script found carved into soft limestone cliffs could pin down the origins of the first alphabet--one of the hallmarks of civilization.

"These are the earliest alphabetic inscriptions, considerably earlier than anyone had thought likely," John Coleman Darnell, an Egyptologist at Yale University, tells the New York Times.

"They seem to provide us with evidence to tell us when the alphabet itself was invented, and just how."

Darnell and his wife Deborah, a Ph.D. student in Egyptology, presented their findings November 22nd at a meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature.

Believed to have been written by Semitic traders working in Egypt, the inscriptions are from a time two to three centuries prior to what was believed to be the earliest alphabet, and date to somewhere between 1900 and 1800 B.C.

Prior to the discovery, evidence suggested that the Semites had developed the simplified hieroglyphic writing in their own lands in the Syria-Palestine region, not in Egypt. That Proto-Canaanite alphabetic writing dated to about 1600 B.C.

The first-known invention of all writing dates the Sumerians to around 3200 B.C.

The Darnells found the writing while studying ancient travel routes near ancient Egypt's royal city of Thebes and the Valley of the Kings, the burial site of pharaoh's tombs. The markings were carved into walls at the Wadi el-Hol, known as the Gulch of Terror.

The inscriptions suggest that mercenaries and traders developed the graffiti-like writing out of the complex Egyptian hieroglyphics. Official scribes spent a lifetime learning hieroglyphics, a system involving hundreds of pictographs.

The Semitic script could be mastered in hours, a democratic revolution that took writing out of the hands of the elite, says the Times.

The Gulch of Terror inscriptions are "clearly the oldest of alphabetic writing and very important," says Frank M. Cross, an emeritus professor of Near Eastern languages and culture at Harvard University, who has examined the evidence.

Cross told the Times that some of the symbols are identical enough to later Semitic alphabetic writing to say they belong "to a single evolution of the alphabet."

Taken from:
Discovery On-line

Now Pay Attention Class!

The following were selected from lists of answers from 16 year olds, complied by the 1998 GCSE examiners.

*Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March murdered him because they thought he was going to be made King. Dying, he gasped out: "Tee hee, Brutus."

*Nero was a cruel tyranny who would torture his subjects by playing the fiddle to them.

*Joan of Arc was burnt to a steak and was canonized by Bernard Shaw. Finally Magna Carta provided that no man should be hanged twice for the same offense.

*It was an age of great inventions and discoveries. Gutenberg invented removable type and the Bible. Another important invention was the circulation of blood. Sir Walter Raleigh is a historical figure. Francis Drake circumcised the world with a 100 foot clipper.

*One of the causes of the Revolutionary War was the English put tacks in their tea. Also, the colonists would send their parcels through the post without stamps. Finally the colonists won the War and no longer had to pay for taxis. Delegates from the original states formed the Contented Congress. Thomas Jefferson, a Virgin, an Benjamin Franklin were two singers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin discovered electricity by rubbing two cats backwards and declared, "A horse divided against itself cannot stand." Franklin died in 1790 and is still dead.

*Gravity was invented by Issac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in the autumn when the apples are falling off the trees.

Donations Received

Ian W. Brown of Tuscaloosa, Alabama made donations to each of the funds; the **Edward C. Mahan Fund**, the **Wimberly Scholarship Fund**, and the **Public Education Fund**.

Your donations are greatly appreciated!!!

Donations can be made to the grant programs any time during the year. Donations to the **Stephen B. Wimberly Scholarship Fund** provide the financial support necessary for the Student Scholarship program, while donations to the **Edward C. Mahan Fund** are used to fund research grants. Funds for the Public Education grants are provided by the **Public Education Special Projects Fund**. Due to the current low balances in both the **Public Education** and **Edward C. Mahan Funds**, donations to either of these funds would be especially appreciated.

Please send your donations to:

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Calendar of Events

**January 4-9, 2000 - "SHA Quebec 2000,"
the 3rd Conference on Historical and
Underwater Archaeology** will be held at the
Quebec Hilton Hotel, Quebec City, Quebec,

ARTIFACTS!

Do you have any interesting artifacts that you would like to share with the members of the Alabama Archaeological Society? If you do, please send a description of the artifact and a color photo (black and white is fine if that's all you have) to the editorial staff here at *Stones & Bones* and we'll include it in an upcoming issue.



Happy New Year!!!!!!

TELL US ABOUT IT!

The editorial staff at *Stones & Bones* is looking for articles to publish and we would like those articles to come from you the members. If you have visited a site recently that you found to be of interest (it doesn't have to be in Alabama) tell us about it. If you have been doing research on a particular topic, tell us about it. If you have been involved in anything else archaeological, tell us about it. These do not have to be professional papers, so please feel free to contribute. If you have color pictures (if you only have black and white photos that's fine) which accompany your article, please send those as well and we will include them with your article.

READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?

Are you a reader? Do you read interesting books about archaeology and related topics? Do you think others might be interested in reading the same books? If so, *Stones & Bones* would like to hear from you. If you have read an interesting book, write a review and send it to us. Book reviews are a good way of letting others know about archaeological publications which may be of interest.

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY



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