

Alabama Archaeological Society

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MOUND STATE MONUMENT TO HOST 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

A 50th Anniversary Celebration will climax the week-long Moundville Indian Festival on Saturday, October 28. The series of events, co-sponsored by the Alabama State Museum of Natural History, the Alabama Archaeological Society, and the Alabama Humanities Foundation, will begin on The University of Alabama campus and move to the park in Moundville.

The Alabama Archaeological Society will co-sponsor a public meeting at 10:00 a.m. in the Museum of Natural History, 205 Smith Hall, where University President Roger Sayers and host, Dr. Douglas E. Jones, Museum Director and acting Vice President for Academic Affairs, will welcome visitors to the celebration.

Following a slide/lecture by Dr. Vincas Steponaitis of the University of North Carolina on the topic "120 Years of Moundville Archaeology", the public is invited to view an exhibition in the Museum gallery. The photographic multi-media exhibition, entitled "The Mounds Awaken: Contributions of the CCC to Mound State Monument", will feature shots of the Civilian Conservation Corps taken during the 1930's, along with artifacts and videos from the 1930's and audio-taped interviews of workers who participated in the project. This exhibit will be on display at Smith Hall from October 28 to December 22.

After lunch the program will continue at Mound State Monument in Moundville, south of Tuscaloosa. Featured events will be demonstrations of Indian crafts and traditions, tours of the park and Indian Museum, and a keynote address atop one of the largest mounds near the center of the park.

Dr. Christopher Peebles of Indiana University, an expert in Southeastern Indian culture, will speak on "The People and Culture of Prehistoric Moundville" at 2:30 p.m.

The Moundville Indian Festival will continue till 4:30 Saturday afternoon. Individuals or groups who wish to obtain further information about attending the series of events, please contact Mound State Monument at 371-2572, or the Alabama State Museum of Natural History at 348-7550. (Special rates have been obtained at the Tuscaloosa Sheraton Capstone Inn - single \$60, double \$66. Reservations must be received by September 27.)

September 1989



WHAT IS IT?

The photographs accompanying this article were taken by Lonnie Cook, who found and owns the statue. The photographs show the statue from the left side, back, front, and close-up of the head.

The statue was found in 1976 in a cultivated field, with only the shoulder exposed. The location was in the Missouri River Valley, some 70 miles east of Kansas City. Other artifacts found in the vicinity include projectile points and sand-tempered pottery. Cook says the statue is made of "compressed" granite, greenish in color, with small white pieces making it conglomerate in nature. Its size is 26 inches long, 12 inches wide and 12 inches thick (varying), and it weighs 68 pounds. Cook is seeking help and information on identifying the statue.

Please write to Lonnie Cook; Route 5, Box 30; Carrollton, MO 64633 (816/542-1636).

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CARNIVAL

The story unfolding about the archaeological work at the graves of five men in Lake City, Colorado borders on the bizarre and unbelievable. First, a little background - during the winter of 1874, a group of six prospectors, led by A. G. Packer, attempted to cross the San Juan Mountains on their way to the gold fields of Colorado. They became marooned in the high country, but on April 16 Packer appeared at the Los Pinos Indian Agency. Authorities became suspicious when he was found to be carrying several packages of human flesh. Packer admitted killing one of the men (S. W. Bell) in self defense when he returned to the camp from a scouting trip to find four of the men dead, having been hacked to death with a hatchet used by Bell. Packer also admitted eating the flesh of the other four men in order to survive. Packer escaped custody but was arrested in 1883 and taken to Lake City, Colorado, where he was convicted of murdering Israel Swan, one of the prospectors. His trial was overturned by the Supreme Court, and he was retried for all five murders and convicted of manslaughter at Gunnison. In 1886 he was sentenced to 40 years, was paroled in 1901 and died in 1907.

Last summer Professor James E. Starrs of the George Washington University Law Center arrived in Lake City and claimed to have located the graves near a memorial marker. It seems he used this case in his law classes. He organized an archaeological expedition of 13 "scientists and archaeologists" to unearth the truth of Packer's statements, and this summer they unearthed four bodies and later another one. An analysis of the bones by "experts" supported Packer's claim that he had killed only one of the prospectors. The other four were repeatedly hacked, and further analysis at the University of Arizona concluded that knife marks on the bones were consistent with defleshing of the bodies.

This so-called "scientific" expedition strikes us as a flagrant and unwarranted invasion of privacy; after all, the men have been dead only 115 years. Are we going to allow every professor who wants a few additional notes

for his class to go around digging up bodies and desecrating graves? And what did this expedition accomplish? Nothing! Everything learned was already known and in the records. The Lake City townspeople joined the revelry by selling buttons reading "Alferd Packer Ate Here"; T-shirts available shouted "Have a Friend for Dinner" and "Alferd Packer Serving His Fellow Man". A restaurant menu offered "Packer's Platter for Those with a Man-Eating Appetite". This morbid and bizarre event says much about the very nature of man.

This is the type of archaeology that is helping to push a bill through Congress that may put a stop to all grave digging - those 5,000 years old or those 115 years old.

The Editor

ARROWPOINTS

We want to gratefully acknowledge the generous donation to our Archives of several issues of Arrowpoints. These help fill some of the gaps that we are trying to close for a total collection. This donation was made by Robert Zietz, now retired, Mobile Public Library, and the Director of Local History and Genealogy, George Schroeter, also of the Library.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY OF THE ORIGINAL SITE OF FRENCH MOBILE, 1702-1711

Local tradition has long associated the area of Twenty-seven Mile Bluff on the Mobile River with the location of the early French settlement of Mobile. But archaeological traces of this important site have only recently been discovered. The old town site is now the focus of a research project directed by archaeologists at the University of South Alabama.

Beginning in 1977, an engineer employed at Courtaulds of North America, Inc., James C. (Buddy) Parnell became interested in locating the old town site, with the ultimate goal of identifying, securing, and remarking the town cemetery, in which were buried some prominent members of the original colony. His methods included intense scrutiny of aerial photographs of the site. Numerous unusual features were noted on the aerial photos, such as a possible fort image and several straight lines and right angles seemingly associated with the original street block grid. When searches were made on the ground, early in 1989, to confirm the existence of the streets, Parnell (along with his wife, Woody; and Pat and Puggin Lomax) discovered several low mounds containing early 18th century French bricks, ceramics and other artifacts. These mounds apparently were the locations of French houses in the town.

The Parnells and Lomaxes immediately recognized the immense historical and archaeological significance of their discovery. Buddy Parnell's original project to locate the old cemetery has now grown to include a long-term archaeological research plan being implemented by Dr. Gregory Waselkov at the University of South Alabama. With the very generous permission and support of landowners, an excavation team is already working this summer surveying and mapping the town

site. One goal is to firmly establish the layout of the town, including several key features shown on the 1702 and 1704 maps - the fort, a well, and the cemetery. Several house mounds are also scheduled for excavation.

The site of Old Mobile is a rare opportunity to learn about daily life in Alabama and the deep South during the colonial period. Most early French sites are covered by modern cities, such as at New Orleans, St. Louis and present-day Mobile. But at Old Mobile, an entire colonial town site exists, undisturbed by later construction and thoughtless relic hunting.

The Friends of Old Mobile is a newly organized support group of interested citizens that will work to promote public awareness and appreciation of the project through education and publicity, and to generate community financial support. Current archaeological excavations at the site of Old Mobile depend on community support. The cost of this summer's exploratory work alone will exceed \$30,000. Join The Friends of Old Mobile and help us learn more about life in early Alabama. Contributors of \$25 or more will receive subsequent issues of the newsletter with reports on the latest discoveries. Contributions are tax deductible. Please make your checks payable to "University of South Alabama Archaeology Fund", and send it to:

The Old Mobile Project
c/o Dr. Stephen Thomas, Associate Dean
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Alabama
Mobile, Alabama 36688

(From "The Old Mobile Project Newsletter", Issue 1, Summer 1989)

STANFORD WILL RETURN INDIAN BONES

In an unprecedented agreement, Stanford University will return the skeletal remains of about 550 Ohlone Indians to their descendants in Northern California for reburial. The agreement has won wide praise from leaders of American Indian groups, who in recent years have demanded that their burial grounds and other sacred sites be treated with more respect.

But the university's announcement this week has touched off a controversy among anthropologists and archaeologists, with some of these scholars arguing that important scientific, medical and demographic research will suffer.

(From an article by Jane Gross in The New York Times; Saturday, June 24, 1989)

MAYA WRITING

Prehistory is the study of peoples without writing, whereas history is the study of people who possess written texts. Yet, although the Maya had the most highly developed system of writing in pre-Columbian America, until recently they were studied largely as a prehistoric people. The reason was simple: their writing could not be read. Within the past decade all that has

changed. Building on critical insights into the structure and content of Maya writing put forward in the 1950's, a fairly small group of scholars, including the two of us, has puzzled out a sizable fraction of the known writings of the Maya. These writings, inscribed on ceramic vessels, have begun to augment the picture of Maya society that was derived from the patient work of excavation.

The glyphic system in which the early texts (and subsequent ones) were written was not invented by the Maya. On the contrary, it seems they built on an ancient form that had been in use for centuries among advanced cultures to the west. Writing was present in what is now the state of Oaxaca by about 700 B.C., as is shown by the discovery there of a monument inscribed with early glyphs.

Whatever the precise origins of Maya writing, by the beginning of the Classic period of Maya culture in about A.D. 250, hieroglyphs were in use at hundreds of sites.

(From an article by David Stuart and Stephen D. Houston in "Scientific American", August 1989)

A 6,000-YEAR HISTORY OF AMAZONIAN MAIZE CULTIVATION

We present pollen and phytolith evidence for maize cultivation in lowland Ecuadorian Amazonia as early as 4,300 radiocarbon years BP, equivalent to about 6,000 calendar years BP. This date for maize cultivation is more than 2,000 years earlier than any previously reported from the Amazon basin. Although maize has been cultivated for at least 7,000 years in Mexico, the manner of its dispersal through South America is still uncertain. Evidence from coastal Ecuador suggested that maize had been taken south across the equator by 7,000 years BP. The oldest macrofossil evidence from Ecuador, however, is from about 3,400 years BP. Our discovery of *Zea* microfossils in Amazonian lake sediments from Ecuador at about 6,000 years BP suggests that maize cultivation spread into the Amazonian lowlands soon after its arrival in South America.

(From an article by Mark B. Bush et al in "Nature", July 27, 1989)

David Hathaway
Huntsville

ORIGINS OF FULL-SCALE AGRICULTURE

The harvesting of crops using replicas of ancient sickle-blades from the Near East, and comparison of the resulting wear on the replicas with that on the original blades, suggest that early soil tillage and plant cultivation began as long ago as the eleventh millennium B.C., Romana Unger-Hamilton now reports. She used almost 300 experimental flint blades of various kinds to harvest different species of the wild and cultivated plants common to the area. Unger-Hamilton finds that it takes about 10,000 strokes to develop a strong lustre on the blades, suggesting that the ancient blades were used for some

time, perhaps as multi-purpose tools. The distribution of the polish on the blade depends on the species harvested, presumably because of the stem structure of the plant. The number of striations on the blade is also dependent on the type of ground in which the plant grows. The striations are caused by loose soil trapped at the base of the stems rather than by the plant itself. When the plants are cut close to the ground, the soil comes between blade and stem, so the side of the blade turned towards the ground becomes more striated.

(From an article by Paul G. Bahn in "Nature", June 29, 1989)

David Hathaway
Huntsville

AMERICAN INDIAN INDEX

THE AMERICAN INDIAN INDEX - by Dr. Gregory W. Frazier.

There are over 1,500,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives enrolled or recognized in the United States today and another 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 individuals who are of Indian descent according to some sources. Where are the Indian tribes, how can the Federal agencies be contacted and where can one go for information? Where are the arts and crafts outlets? How can one contact the 400 Indian newspapers? When and where are the pow wows? How many Indian museums are there? Where are the free health centers? Who are the national Indian organizations?

Available from Arrowstar Publishing; 10134 University Park Station; Denver, Colorado 80210-0134. \$19.95 plus \$1.50 shipping and handling.

USING U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

The Archeological Society of Virginia (ASV) announces its latest publication, "Using U.S. Geological Survey Topographic Maps", by William Jack Hranicky, who is editor/publisher of Popular Archaeology. The book contains an overview of maps and map reading as it applies to archaeology; however, it can be used by anyone who wants to learn how to read USGS topographic maps.

It can be obtained from: ASV Treasurer; Box 41; Courtland, Virginia 23837. It costs \$6.50 plus \$1.50 for postage and handling; 65 pages; photos, drawings, tables, maps, references and index.

EXHIBIT

"HAND OF MAN" - An exhibition of Prehistoric Cave Art - August 5 to September 17, 1989 - Red Mountain Museum Auditorium, Birmingham. Tuesday to Saturday, 11-4; Sunday, 1-4.

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> (<i>Journal of Alabama Archaeology</i>) Vol. VIII Nos. 1 & 2 - Reprint, each issue	\$5.00 pp
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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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